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TECHNOLOGY AND CULTURE IN MODERN RUSSIA

by

Joseph Silver

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Thesis Advisor:	Mikhail Tsypkin
Second Reader:	Boris Keyser

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13. ABSTRACT

Russians have seen communication and transportation technology facilitate greater interaction between themselves and with foreigners. Some cultural values and beliefs blend, but others clash. Perception, norms and identity act as a filter for interpreting information. Savvy operators can manipulate communication technology to shape cultural expectations, influencing interpretations to their own advantage. The powerful norm of obedience to authority is likely to cause the majority to largely conform to the requirements of authority figures; yet recent history in Russia demonstrates how excessive control ultimately resulted in diminished social trust, with individuals wary of authority and each other. There are limits on how far a person can influence another's ideas and actions. Attempts to assert total control are likely to meet with human creativity finding ways to assert choice.

People tend to rely on their *own*, those who share a common identity, for they most closely share values and interests. Russia has demonstrated how communication technology can serve as a tool to disseminate and reinforce concepts of what is "ours" while establishing the threat of the "Other." When choosing sides on an issue, perceptions of identity influence loyalties. Understanding Russia's current cultural perspective is necessary to properly interpret Russian messages and actions.

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TECHNOLOGY AND CULTURE IN MODERN RUSSIA

Joseph Silver
Captain, United States Air Force
B.A., Russian Studies, Brigham Young University, 1999

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December 2007

Author: Joseph Silver

Approved by: Mikhail Tsypkin
                      Thesis Advisor

                      Boris Keyser
                      Second Reader

                      Douglas Porch
                      Chairman, Department of National Security Affairs

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I.   INTRODUCTION

The fall of the Soviet Union and its shroud of secrecy coincided with the advent of the Information Age, when in advanced countries around the world technology began to play a greater role than ever before in human lives. Russia entered a period of relative freedom in which it could more openly engage in world affairs. Western and Eastern technology and culture flooded across her borders while those same borders no longer restricted travel abroad, empowering many and affecting traditional culture. Noting the powerful effect of ideas on society, and how technology often facilitates the spread of ideas, this thesis intends to consider the question of how people may employ communication technology to influence culture in modern Russia.

Recognizing technology's impact on Russian culture can give insights into how Russians are responding to greater interaction between themselves and with foreigners. Understanding Russia's current cultural perspective is necessary to properly interpret Russian messages and actions. *Technology* as used in this paper largely refers to machines which facilitate human interaction via communication and/or transportation, with focus on communication systems. *Culture* refers to the prevailing social norms of a group, including values and beliefs with their accompanying behavior patterns. *Modern Russia* generally encompasses ethnic Russians of Russia during the contemporary time period, with particular emphasis on the period following the fall of the Soviet Union through to the present. As technology itself is an inanimate tool used by humans, the impact of technology is a matter of how humans apply technology to change their lives— and the lives of others. The extent of communication technology's impact (or one party's influence on another via this tool) depends on access to such technology, the ability to employ it, cultural values dictating its proper use, and the effect of each message being filtered through the complexities of human perception.

First, this thesis addresses the human factor in aspects of culture such as perception, norms, and identity. Second, as society relies on unity for its permanence and continuing culture, a discussion follows on trust in Russia's recent past. Last, this thesis

considers some modern examples of people employing communication technology to influence Russian society, precedents in Russian history, and implications of technology and culture intertwining in the modern day. Before proceeding further, some background is in order.

Situated between Europe and Asia, for the past millennium Russia has grown outward, much of the time expanding its realm of influence. As Richard Pipes concludes, much of Russia's history took place under a patrimonial state: the tsar and ruling boyars created a power gulf between them and the peasants in control of resources, property rights, and access to information.[1] Even by the early 20th century, literacy rates in Russia remained low. While Soviet leadership strove to improve literacy for the sake of technological advancement, they increased control of information and abolished private property rights. Both the tsars and the Soviet rulers imposed collective responsibility, which created a repressive mindset among Russian peasants and stifled innovation. Martin Malia agrees with Pipes on the importance of property rights and control of resources for an effective society, claiming that Communism in Soviet Russia was bound to fail.[2]

Against this political, economic, and cultural background, Russia oscillated between isolationism and relative openness, progressing during periods of openness and slowing during periods of isolation. Russia's armies keenly felt times of backwardness on the battlefield when falling to superior military technology. At other times various tsars invited European architects, military officers, and other skilled professionals to come build Russia and teach in her Academies. When allowed to blossom, Russia produced world-class music, art, literature and technology; when suppressed, advancement slowed. Konstantin Kostjuk claims that Russian culture impeded technological advancement in the 20th century.[3] Yuri Morozov furthers this case with his study on the impact of technology on social activities contrasted against how Russia's

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[1] Pipes, *Russia under the Old Regime.*

[2] Malia, *The Soviet Tragedy.*

[3] Kostjuk, "Archaicism and Modernism," 5-19.

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culture limits methods of modernization.[4] Loren Graham and colleagues "examine the ways in which social and cultural factors shape the progress and application of technology" within the Soviet Union and Russia.[5] The link between culture and technology is tenable.

An important aspect of culture is information; access to information has ever been an element of power and control in society, and information shapes many of the expectations and beliefs which people hold. Regarding the control of information in Russia's past, Pipes notes, "Until January 1703 all domestic and foreign news in Russia was deemed a state secret."[6] Furthermore, reflecting the lack of accountability of the state to the people, the national budget "until 1862 [remained] a closely guarded state secret."[7] Foreigners, when allowed in the country, were often cordoned off into small villages, separate from the common Russian people and limited in opportunities for interaction with elites. Periods of openness then isolation continued to oscillate, ending with later Soviet rule exercising strict censorship of all media. The demise of the Soviet Union led to another period of relative openness. Addressing the age-old issue recurring this time in modern form, Henrike Schmidt and Katy Teubener discuss how the Internet presents a challenge to state control, sparking "debates over freedom and censorship in Russia's part of the World Wide Web."[8] Elena Vartanova also reflects on the increase of available information on the Internet and the state's attempts to control it,[9] while Yu Ageshin takes a more positive stance by simply stressing Russia's need to build up an information economy in order to more fully join the modern world.[10] Irina Dezhina and Loren Graham discuss limitations in the commercial culture in Russia,[11] making similar

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[4] Morozov, "Changes of Cultures."

[5] Graham and Scanlan, *Experience of the Soviet Model*.

[6] Pipes, *Russia under the Old Regime*, 111.

[7] Ibid., 70.

[8] Schmidt and Teubener, "Internet in Russia," 79-93.

[9] Vartanova, *The Russian Network Society*.

[10] Ageshin, "Informatsionnaya Kul'tura," 10-12.

[11] Dezhina and Graham, "Russia Taking First Steps," 6.

arguments to Elia Chepaitis' discussion of unethical information practices in Russia.[12] In another work Chepaitis also discusses Russia's weak business culture.[13] Within these discussions about cultural aspects of applied technology, Manuel Castells argues that information influences productivity in the Russian network society.[14] The common theme in these works is that information and cultural values affect manufacture, distribution, marketing, and use of technology. In particular, they note how a repressive information environment is detrimental to progress in society.

Focusing on a similar theme at an earlier time, B. C. Galvin "analyzes the effect of Russian culture and Soviet ideology on Soviet science." He notes that repressive aspects of Russian culture impeded breakthroughs in technology, "compel[ling] their reliance on Western technology."[15] Interestingly, a decade later James Sherr relates "that most Russian intelligence collection targets technology,"[16] indicating that Russian cultural factors led to their high emphasis in espionage to acquire the West's technology for exploitation.

Slava Gerovitch adds a twist by noting that older individuals in technology and science were less influenced by perestroika than younger ones;[17] this implies that access to more information and relative freedom of expression has greater influence on the mindsets of the rising generation. Paul Richardson widens this concept by observing Russians' mixed reaction in acceptance and rejection of foreign goods.[18] Six years prior to his work, Carmelo Tolosana examined technology's role in globalization and the apparent reaction of Russia and other countries to maintain national identity by rejecting their relative concepts of "foreignness."[19]

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[12] Chepaitis, "Information Ethics," 195-200.

[13] Chepaitis, "After the Command Economy," 5.

[14] Castells, *The Network Society*.

[15] Galvin, *Russian Culture and Soviet Science*, 157.

[16] Sherr, "Cultures of Spying," 56.

[17] Gerovitch, "Perestroika of History of Technology," 102-134.

[18] Richardson, "The Battle for Russia," 2.

[19] Tolosana, "Anthropology of Foreignness," 43-59.

In contrast to cultural factors influencing the development and use of technology, A. I. Solov'ev discusses how electronic communication is projecting culture to a greater degree into politics.[20] A natural extension of that is the global reach of modern international media, allowing information and cultural values to flow across borders like never before. This can be good or bad, depending on both the content and the reception. Along these lines Olga Vershinskaya studies how information technology impacts Russian families, noting important resultant changes in "traditional cultural roles in the family."[21] There is value in comparing technology's influence on culture across the span of various countries, perhaps thereby perceiving distinct patterns of its impact on humankind overall; various articles address the "modernization" impact. However, remaining within the scope of this paper, it is time to consider the context of human perception.

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[20] Solov'ev, "Communication and Culture," 6.

[21] Vershinskaya, *Impact of Modern Information Technology*.

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II.   THE HUMAN FACTOR

A.   PERCEPTION AND EXPECTATIONS

Would any rational being seek war over peace? Most people would not escalate a situation without thinking that they could handle it and that they could gain from it; most leadership would not initiate a war without thinking they had a fair chance of winning. However, when considering the factors influencing a "rational calculation" for action, one must acknowledge that while humans are rational creatures, they are also emotional creatures; at times logic prevails, but at other times the passions dominate. Even when the level head masters the heart, the mind's reasoning depends on sound information for good judgment. Expectations, cultural values, and beliefs join with personal experience to shape the perspective of an individual. Add in a fear factor, and a normally rational person can be tempted to draw exaggerated conclusions. To counter this, knowledge can temper fear; Richard N. Lebow describes how reading and re-reading Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War*, "drew me back from the emotional and short-term perspectives that tend to dominate the untrained mind's response to dramatic contemporary events."[22] Although both parties may manage to master their emotions and place an event in a relatively proper perspective, differing expectations may lead to misunderstanding—and unnecessary escalation.

Lebow proposes that, "Policy-makers are more responsive to information that supports their existing beliefs than they are to information that challenges them."[23] Individuals tend to develop an understanding of how the world works and then interpret information in terms of this perspective. This perception framework is a necessary condition to assess information's value; the framework forms a mindset, a prism through which the viewer interprets information. This prism remains fixed in the short term, human nature even encouraging its temporary rigidity in order to maintain cognitive continuity. Information which easily assimilates into this perspective receives support

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[22] Lebow, *Tragic Vision*, ix.

[23] Lebow, *Peace and War*, 105.

from other experiences; however, when information is contrary to established beliefs, an individual tends to set it aside for further analysis or reject it outright. If a number of sources persuade an individual to reconsider, they can adapt their perspective to account for the new information, integrating and correlating this new experience with all the others. This quality of cognitive inertia ensures greater continuity and stability in an individual's life. The effect is that individuals tend to only make incremental adjustments to their perspective and thus in the short term maintain their overall perspective. Individuals therefore need incentive and some amount of time to reshape their expectations.

The proposition of cognitive continuity explains why two individuals could react differently to the same bit of information, indeed the difference matching the extent of dissimilarity between their perspectives. An example of this can be seen in the reactions of individuals missed by a passing tornado: A religious person would account his good fortune to the hand of God, adding this event to previous experiences which he considers also demonstrate God's influence in his life. An atheist would consider that the forces of nature acted according to their patterns and in this case combined in such a way as to not destroy him. Both a religious person and an atheist can take precautions for their protection within their sphere of influence; but their differing interpretations of the same event would encourage a religious person to continue to rely on his God for those things beyond his control, yet encourage an atheist to rely on himself for everything. A singular event viewed through a variety of perspectives can engender a myriad of reactions—yet not by some random function, rather according to their various mindsets and expectations.

An adversary's cultural expectations can influence the perception of the other party's resolve. Perceptions play a crucial role, as "a commitment seen as credible by one policy-maker may be seen as questionable by another…The subjective nature of credibility constitutes a serious problem."[24] Alexander L. George asks:

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[24] Lebow, *Peace and War*, 83.

> Will the adversary view concessions as evidence of goodwill, friendship, and recognition of the legitimacy of his revisionist claims, or as evidence of irresolution and weakness and therefore tempt him to seek greater gain?[25]

A peace offering is certainly a good start, but to be agreeable it must include an exit strategy for both parties so each may make a graceful exit in the view of their respective support groups. "The strategy of conditional reciprocity," states George, "demanding some meaningful change in policy and behavior in return for each concession or benefit, is safer and likely to be more effective than pure conciliation."[26] There are times, however, when the benefit of escalation may appear greater than the cost of conciliation. When choices lead to such a hostile situation, it may be difficult to communicate clearly with one another; even worse, oftimes both parties feel a real pressure from their support groups to defend their respective interests. With each side wishing to somehow claim a victory, a possible resolution to the conflict becomes a complicated matter. As the Russian saying goes, "*Protiv loma net prijoma, esli net drugogo loma*" (Against a crowbar there is no way, unless there is another crowbar). If the cultural expectation states the need to apply force in order to counter force, available options shrink significantly—and due to cognitive inertia, it is unlikely that either party will be able to reshape the other's cultural expectations quickly. This desire to achieve a perceived balance of power can lead to drastic results. Many scholars consider that leading up to the Cuban missile crisis President John F. Kennedy sent mixed messages to the Soviet Union which ultimately led Premier Nikita Khrushchev to consider Kennedy's resolve questionable. Cultural expectations motivated Khrushchev to pursue an aggressive agenda.

When misperceptions led to miscalculation, both sides found themselves in a nuclear crisis wherein they thought they could not back down for fear of appearing weak to the other. Fortunately they found a private solution between themselves to which their respective publics were not privy; "Khrushchev and Kennedy…cooperated to find ways

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[25] George, "Need for Influence Theory," 468.

[26] Ibid., 470.

of making concessions while conveying the appearance of resolve."[27] Later reflecting on this unnecessary show of force, Premier Mikhail Gorbachev lamented, "The world had almost been blown up because two boys were fighting in the schoolyard over who had the bigger stick."[28] Whether in Berlin, the Cuban missile crisis, or the October 1973 War between Arabs and Israel, misperceptions and expectations played crucial roles in determining the course of escalation during the Cold War. As noted by Lebow:

> Studies of "mirror images" have been carried out by comparing adversaries' perceptions of themselves with perceptions of each other. They reveal that the United States and the Soviet Union exaggerate each other's hostility in comparison to their self-image.[29]

Such mindsets are bound to clash with each other.

Interaction and communication can reshape mindsets, bringing expectations more closely in line with reality and averting potential conflicts. As Lebow's research revealed, "The presence of a vulnerable commitment does not appear to be a precondition for brinkmanship. What counts is the *perception* by the initiator that such a vulnerable commitment exists."[30] This implies that in deterrence calculations, what an adversary *thinks* he needs is likely to play a greater role in his decisions than what he actually needs. Does he need a carrot or a stick? What does he *think* he needs as a precondition for action? He likely formed his opinions over a long period of time; it may be hard to change his mind.

B.   NORMS AND OBEDIENCE

Advances in transportation technology have given rise to interesting situations which reflect on human understanding. Able to traverse great distances in a relatively short time, people can perceive a more stark contrast between climates—and cultures. A fellow working in a hot desert could return home the same day to a very different climate. Having been accustomed to the heat of the sun and sands, after a quick, abrupt shift he

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[27] Lebow, *We All Lost*, 110-111.

[28] Ibid., xi.

[29] Lebow, *Peace and War*, 91.

[30] Ibid., 97.

could find himself physically shivering at 78ºF when others around him lounge in shorts. Similarly, when a person leaves the blasting heat of the street to enter an air-conditioned store, the blast of cold air can chill. One winter day many years ago in snow-swept Latvia, the author stepped outside into the white world all bundled up as usual; yet today seemed warm. The sun shone in a blue sky. It had been -30ºC for a week, then a "warm spell" came along. Physically sweating, the author removed his parka and stood on the snowpack awaiting a bus. A nearby sign soon flashed the current temperature: -10ºC. His first response was disbelief. In his mind he knew a negative centigrade temperature is really cold. "Their thermostat must be wrong because I feel warm." Yet it was right.

> A nice demonstration of perceptual contrast is sometimes employed in psychophysics laboratories to introduce students to the principle firsthand. Each student takes a turn sitting in front of three pails of water—one cold, one at room temperature, and one hot. After placing one hand in the cold water and one in the hot water, the student is told to place both in the lukewarm water simultaneously. The look of amused bewilderment that immediately registers tells the story: Even though both hands are in the same bucket, the hand that has been in the cold water feels as if it is now in hot water, while the one that was in the hot water feels as if it is now in cold water. The point is that the same thing—in this instance, room-temperature water—can be made to seem very different, depending on the nature of the event that precedes it.[31]

Imagine a person now whisked through the air in a high-flying machine, quickly removed from his accustomed "cold" culture and placed right in the middle of a "room-temperature" culture. Many ideas and behaviors are foreign to him; it feels "hot." Another person whisked from an accustomed "hot" culture could land in the same airport, at the same time, but perceive those same ideas and behaviors as "cold." Here, in the same city, the locals would not think the culture hot or cold, but naturally *room temperature*.

What is the real temperature? To find out, one needs a thermostat. No quicksilver can summarize a culture with a simple number; instead, historical records, oral traditions, prevailing social norms, linguistic expressions, manufactured products, architecture, and art reflect the values of a culture. These emblems or symbols identify

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[31] Cialdini, *Psychology of Persuasion*, 12.

and unite the participants, as *sharing a symbol declares their common bond*. National monuments serve as symbols of the people, turning the story of their shared history into a permanent object which both represents their continuity together and their wish to live together—a symbol of their unity. As culture is essentially shared norms, values, and behavior, then a cultural thermometer would be a standard measure of how people treat one another. Since symbols may be true or may be crafted, without omniscience it is difficult to accurately establish an absolute scale. The implications of this are that each generation is left to interpret symbols for themselves from their own vantage point of incomplete knowledge. Without recourse to an absolute scale, people are left to turn to existing records; those who control the record also control the "official story" of a nation, the *perception* of cultural history. They influence social norms; they define room temperature. They shape cultural expectations.

This can explain some disagreements over the current "democracy" in Russia. In contrast to the lawlessness of the 1990s, the relative increase in law and order appears as a genuine improvement to many having lived through the difficult times. It seems better, but is it really? For many locals, the answer is actually yes; but on a different scale the answer might be no. Plato's *Allegory of the Cave* refers to coming "into the light" to see the truth, then descending again into the cave to help those who have not yet seen it. He makes a worthwhile observation:

> The bewilderments of the eyes are of two kinds, and arise from two causes, either from coming out of the light or from going into the light, which is true of the mind's eye, quite as much as of the bodily eye.[32]

When people are perplexed about complex cultural issues, one may reflect on whether that "bewilderment" is from coming out of the light or from going into the light—is the water cold or hot? The eyes have an amazing ability to adjust to new light levels, given some time. Behaviors striking one as foreign and strange may not seem so strange after spending some time among the locals. A human's ability to remember and compare can provide indications about levels of light and darkness—that is, as long as emotions do not overly skew the picture.

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[32] Jacobus, *World of Ideas*, 524.

In learning what is right and what is wrong—what is light and what is dark—children look to their parents to determine acceptable behavior, the social norms. They do not know or understand enough to always decide for themselves. As many parents can attest, what parents *say* must be supported by what parents *do*, as children carefully watch their parents' examples. Children also have an amazing ability to discern consistency, likely because in striving to understand their new world they search for recurring, reliable patterns. Recognized patterns of behavior shape expectations. Soon their peers' opinions also influence judgments. This learning process continues into adulthood, being regularly reinforced by their social environment. Even as mature, experienced adults, whenever faced with uncertainty they tend to look around for cues of what is "correct." Those who appear to have some understanding of the matter become a source of guidance, *even if it is only an appearance of understanding*. Those who appear similar to oneself—particularly to one's own perceived "best self"—have greater sway in influencing opinions.[33]

Examples of behavior serve as social proof of their correctness, and the strength of quantity plays on the senses: If many people are doing it, there must be something right. What are the chances that they are all wrong? "They must know something that we do not." Add in the desire to conform or "fit in" with the rest, and the result is a natural tendency to follow the crowd. Since most of the time such logic holds true, it serves as a shortcut for determining appropriate behavior. A couple centuries ago Alexis de Tocqueville commented on the phenomenon:

> If man had to prove for himself all the truths of which he makes use every day, he would never come to an end of it. He would wear himself out proving preliminary points and make no progress. Since life is too short for such a course and human faculties are too limited, man has to accept as certain a whole heap of facts and opinions which he has neither leisure nor power to examine and verify for himself, things which cleverer men than he have discovered and which the crowd accepts. On that foundation he then builds the house of his own thoughts.[34]

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[33] Cialdini, *Psychology of Persuasion*, 140-151.

[34] Hancock, *American Heritage*, 3.

In the increasing hustle and bustle of the modern world with its many labor-saving machines performing mundane tasks, the efficient human tendency to find further shortcuts leads in many instances to virtually automatic routines. This is useful in that it frees people from common tasks so they may focus on other matters of choice.

Sometimes, however, the logic fails; when one looks to his neighbor for guidance, and the neighbor looks to another for input, the third fellow glances to a fourth for a prompting, and the fourth looks at the other three hoping for answers…at such times the result is often inaction, awkward and inappropriate for the situation at hand. In those moments the crowd is particularly susceptible to manipulation. The world stands aside for a man who knows where he is going—or *appears* to know. A man marching confidently toward some goal can sweep many into his wake by his sheer momentum, regardless of whether on deeper reflection the goal is one they would choose or whether it is a poor path to follow to the stated end. The more people he attracts, the greater credibility he will appear to have. Much like gravitation, a body of greater mass commands a greater attracting force.

> Any reader who doubts that the seeming appropriateness of an action is importantly influenced by the number of others performing it might try a small experiment. Stand on a busy sidewalk, pick out an empty spot in the sky or on a tall building, and stare at it for a full minute. Very little will happen around you during that time—most people will walk past without glancing up…Now, on the next day, go to the same place and bring along four friends to look upward too. Within sixty seconds, a crowd of passersby will have stopped to crane their necks skyward with the group. For those pedestrians who do not join you, the pressure to look up at least briefly will be nearly irresistible; if your experiment brings the same results as the one performed by three New York social psychologists, you and your friends will cause 80 percent of all passersby to lift their gaze to your empty spot.[35]

The fact is that more people tend to follow than to lead, to obey than to challenge an authority figure; and that is normal because following another more self-assured than oneself is usually the "right" thing to do.

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[35] Cialdini, *Psychology of Persuasion*, 285 note 3.

People have learned to observe several basic rules of behavior to make society function; adhering to social norms forms a favorable reputation. The rules ingrained into them from their youth are reciprocity, consistency and authority. The rule of reciprocity is "that we should try to repay, in kind, what another person has provided us."[36] A kind gesture, a gift presented, or a service rendered all incur a subtle social obligation to respond in kind, whether at present or at some time in the future. A response according to one's ability and circumstance is appropriate and acceptable. People remember kindness—and unkindness. "There is a genuine distaste for individuals who fail to conform to the dictates of the reciprocity rule."[37] Studies indicate that this norm is both well-established and widespread throughout human society.[38] This first rule ties into the second, consistency, because a person expects others to keep their word just as he must keep his. Once a person commits publicly, a greater social pressure motivates him to follow through on the agreement. Respect and social status often depend on an individual's demonstrated ability to consistently keep his word and respond to social obligations; individuals also feel an internal pressure to maintain a positive self-image of one who does what he says he will do. The first and second rules reinforce the third rule, which is obedience to authority.

From childhood to white hair, society emphasizes the importance of obeying authority figures. Obedience in the grand scheme brings order and stability to society. In the face of uncertainty, particularly when under stress, people defer to those who appear to know what to do or who appear confident and responsible—an authority figure. When people see others dissent from an authority figure, the figure's authority is diminished and the people find it easier to follow the precedent and also dissent. Stanley Milgram conducted a series of experiments in the early 1960s wherein he tested obedience to authority. Volunteers participated in an experiment to test memory under punishment. A formal-looking fellow wearing a lab coat was the "experimenter;" his appearance and status gave him instant authority in the eyes of the volunteers, although in reality he was

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[36] Cialdini, *Psychology of Persuasion*, 17.

[37] Ibid., 35.

[38] Ibid., 18.

an actor. Another actor drew lots with the volunteers to see who would be the "teacher" delivering electric shocks and who would be the "learner" receiving the shocks; a rigged drawing ensured the actor would be the learner and the volunteer would be the teacher. A fancy and scientific-looking "shock generator" had switches for the subject to engage if the learner incorrectly responded to word pairs, beginning at 15 volts and increasing the shock by 15 volts for each mistake. The memory experiment was a guise for an experiment in psychology; the volunteers were the actual subjects under study. The machine was only for looks, but the learner-actor would cry out as if in pain from the "shocks." Various psychiatrists, college students, and middle-class adults "predicted that most subjects would not go beyond the 10th shock level (150 volts, when the victim makes his first explicit demand to be freed); about 4 percent would reach the 20th shock level, and about one subject in a thousand would administer the highest shock on the board."[39] In all, 636 citizens from all walks of life participated as unwitting subjects in the experiment, giving measurable data for "how far people will go to obey." The results shocked those running the experiment.

In Experiment 1 with the learner in a remote, separate room, 65.0% out of 40 subjects obeyed the experimenter all the way to administering the highest shock (450 volts) three times before the experimenter halted the experiment; the mean maximum shock level was 27.0 (405 volts). Experiment 2 included voice feedback from the learner (complaining at 150 volts, at higher voltage increasing to pleas then agonized screams and repeated demands to be set free); 62.5% out of 40 people administered the highest shock level, the mean shock level 24.53 (almost 370 volts). Experiment 3 brought the learner into the same room; in close proximity, although subjects would avert their eyes from the victim, they continued to administer shocks—40.0% out of 40 people went all the way to the end, the mean shock level 20.80 (about 310 volts). Experiment 4 required the subject to physically press the learner's hand onto an electric "shock plate." 30.0% out of 40 people forced the learner's hand onto the plate right to the end, the mean shock level 17.88 (about 265 volts). Proximity to consequences of actions impacted obedience to a degree, but a more important lesson remained: Even though many of the subjects

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[39] Milgram, *Obedience to Authority*, 31.

expressed disagreement with the evolving course of the experiment and asked to halt it, when the authority figure insisted that they continue, *the majority did not challenge authority as predicted.* Many of those who broke with authority made their break at higher voltage levels than expected. Predictions were that no one would continue all the way to 450 volts, but a full half of the subjects obeyed to the very end.

> In the postexperimental interview, when subjects were asked why they had gone on, a typical reply was: 'I wouldn't have done it by myself. I was just doing what I was told.'[40]

The experiments went on. Variations on the experiment revealed several insightful points. First, when the experimenter was physically absent, "several subjects administered lower shocks than were required and never informed the experimenter of their deviation from the correct procedure."[41] They sympathized with the learner, but still found it difficult to break with authority—so they did what they could as a compromise. Second, women performed the same as men: 65.0% out of 40 women obeyed to the end, the mean shock level 24.73 (around 370 volts). Third, when the experimenter allowed the subject to select voltage levels, only one person out of 40 administered 450 volts, and the mean shock level was a mere 5.50 (just over 80 volts); this implies that humans are not violent or sadistic by nature, but respond with violence when context requires it. Fourth, people take orders from authority figures, but not peers. When in Experiment 14 the learner and the experimenter traded places, the authority figure was now in the position of the victim. Yet as soon as he requested to be set free— even with the learner insisting that the subject continue to administer shocks—all 20 out of 20 subjects halted immediately. Compared to obedience in delivering shocks to others lacking the mantle of authority, this implies that respect for the status of an authority figure played a greater role than sympathy for a victim. This is for the *appearance* of authority, as the experimenter was no scientist but had the trappings and air of authority.

Obedience does have its bounds. In Experiment 15 two men in lab coats delivered contradictory commands. Lacking unity, "the disagreement between the

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[40] Milgram, *Obedience to Authority*, 8.

[41] Ibid., 62.

authorities completely paralyzed action."[42] Yet in an intriguing twist, when one authority took the learner's chair and pleaded to stop the experiment but the other authority insisted the subject continue, 65.0% out of 20 people continued to the end, reaching a mean shock level of 23.5 (just over 350 volts). This reveals that people discern hierarchy in authority and obey those of higher authority. When the first authority figure "willingly assumed the role as victim…[he] temporarily diminished his commanding status," placing the other experimenter as a higher authority.[43] In an extension of perceived authority, when in Experiment 17 two peer teachers rebel against the experimenter—reducing his authority in front of the group—the vast majority of subjects followed suit. Only 10.0% out of 40 people continued faithful to the authority to the end, and the mean shock level was a low 16.45 (around 240 volts). The implications are clear: To maintain legitimacy as an authority, one must ensure compliance with one's commands or face loss of credibility. History provides a number of instances where a ruler made a disobedient person a "public example" to reinforce his authority.

Perhaps the most disturbing result came in Experiment 18, wherein the subject performed a supportive role in the process. An accessory to the act, assisting another teacher (a confederate actor) who flicked the switches to administer the shock, 92.5% out of 40 people continued to the end. This setup resulted in the highest degree of obedience, together with the highest mean shock level of 28.65 on a scale of 30. Why? It is simply easier to go along if someone else is doing the dirty work. By diffusing action along a chain of individuals, an authority also diffuses their sense of responsibility for the act. An authority may issue a verbal or written command, but not personally get involved in its remote execution; individuals along the chain of command are likely to simply "do their duty," perhaps even see themselves as virtuous because they perform their duty faithfully and/or efficiently for some stated noble goal; and the final individuals who commit the violent acts justify their behavior because the issuing authority is responsible

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[42] Milgram, *Obedience to Authority*, 107.

[43] Ibid., 111.

for the command. As technology facilitates larger corporations, larger governments, and larger armies, responsibility can easily get lost in their numbers unless leadership remains publicly accountable in the eyes of those within and without the organization.

In an analysis of interview responses of 118 subjects following the first four experiments, Milgram discovered an important pattern:

> Defiant subjects see *themselves* as principally responsible for the suffering of the learner, assigning 48 percent of the total responsibility to themselves and 39 percent to the experimenter. The balance tips slightly for the obedient subjects, who do not see themselves as any more responsible than the experimenter, and indeed, are willing to accept slightly less of the responsibility…The obedient subjects assign [the learner] about twice as large a share of the responsibility for his own suffering as do the defiant subjects. When questioned on this matter, they point to the fact that he volunteered for the experiment and did not learn very efficiently.[44]

In short, the more a person sees himself as responsible for an action, the more he is likely to decide for himself what action to take and act accordingly. Furthermore, those who faithfully obey orders are likely to devalue their victims in order to justify their action against them. In this light, the populations under Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia were likely not as evil as some portray, but rather were striving to uphold social norms of obedience to authority under difficult circumstances. Pursuing a noble cause, they devalued their victims to make obedience easier—for Nazis, anyone classified as ugly or inferior was a threat to their future beautiful society; for Soviets, a *vrag naroda* (enemy of the people) would undermine their utopia, and so deserved harsh treatment. The tragedy came when leaders applied the negative label arbitrarily, moving the masses for their own political gain or to settle old scores. Under Stalin's purges, authority figures went so far as to pressure young children to testify against their own parents. Both Nazi and Soviet leadership led their people to devastating ends, leaving millions dead and many millions more enduring extensive suffering.

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[44] Milgram, *Obedience to Authority*, 204.

C.   IDENTITY AND LOYALTY

Observing the rules of reciprocity, continuity, and obedience in society, people form cultural expectations from within a social context. How people organize themselves in that social context, how they identify themselves, and how they align their loyalties are important questions. Whether along religious lines or ethnic lines—or a combination of both—how people perceive their identity plays an important role in their behavior. Loyalty to a group often depends on whether people feel accepted by the group, and whether they chose to be a part of that group. Studies have shown that, "A person who feels responsible for the terms of a contract will be more likely to live up to that contract."[45] This loyalty is what truly grants rulers the power to rule, and it provides cohesion to society. How Russians perceive their own belonging influences where their loyalties lie.

For hundreds of years European kings claimed that God gave them divine authority to rule, implying that God would assist them in fighting the people's battles; church sanction reinforced this claim, adding divine retribution for disobedience to the king's will. Yet in the wake of many religious wars and the investiture controversy, in the eighteenth century Jean-Jacques Rousseau presented a critical change of perspective in his work *The Social Contract*. Rousseau claimed that the current state suppressed individuals due to its self-interest, and that the community had a right to organize itself to ensure an effective state. This effectively denounced a king's divine investiture or right to rule over the people without their consent. The idea of people choosing associations for themselves is a powerful concept, one which increased in popularity and came to prevail throughout Europe and the Western world in the twentieth century.

This premise of choice by the people lay at the heart of upcoming revolutions. Although the American Colonies were very religious, they separated church from state. The Declaration of Independence of 1776 proclaimed that "Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed." From the perspective that the community selects its leaders, then if it so deems necessary, the

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[45] Cialdini, *Psychology of Persuasion*, 50.

community can also choose *new* leaders—a concept indeed threatening the very base of legitimacy for European monarchs. The French Revolution soon followed in 1789, then followed the Napoleonic Wars. The European Revolution failed in 1848. Various nationalistic movements grew throughout the nineteenth century, culminating in Eastern Europe in the Communist Revolutions of the twentieth century. Whether King, Kaiser, or Tsar, each revolution challenged their "divine" right to rule. Each revolution cast off responsibility to obey the monarch and set up a new government "sanctioned by the people." These revolutionary movements sought to wrench power from the established nobility in order to establish a new state more closely reflecting the interests of the common people. The upper estates—those which required birth to enter into their elevated ranks—vigorously fought to retain their positions of authority and wealth, while the lower estates—the common people, peasants and workers—saw economic and social inequalities and began more and more to question why the upper estates should be the ones to rule. Issues of legitimacy mixed with social injustices (real or perceived) to create a yearning for change.

That change came; Hagen Schulze describes the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as "The Pivotal Period" in which the European societies of estates transformed into societies of class. What was the catalyst? Machines. The Industrial Revolution facilitated greater concentration of large populations in urban areas as well as significant economic growth. People were also able to communicate much more quickly, as well as travel greater distances in shorter periods of time. The increased interaction between people, and the greater movement of larger masses, upset the previous stability of the estate society. Economic opportunities allowed a middle class to grow; many gained great wealth by their factories, and began to enjoy luxuries which were previously privileges of the aristocracy—yet they did not possess the birthright. Literacy increased together with printing, and ideas flowed more freely to the masses. With this flow of ideas came mass politics, and with populations now larger and conveniently concentrated in cities, it was possible to organize mass movements. These new movements questioned

the political legitimacy of the "high-born," "demanding new forms of representation that took account of the ineptitude of the so-called 'estates', as well as the ideologies of the new age."[46]

In this era calling for change, society changed. Society previously identified itself by religious conviction and by personal bond to a particular lord, which two elements often reinforced each other. However, beginning largely in the eighteenth century and gaining momentum in the nineteenth—together with the concept of the people choosing associations for themselves, or rule by consent—European societies began ever more to identify themselves by their *nation*. Ernest Renan in the late nineteenth century made a strong argument for defining modern nations, stating, "A nation is a soul, a mental principle…a store of memories [and] the currently valid agreement, the wish to live together."[47] This "wish to live together" emphasizes the people's choice, adding a historical memory (real or imagined) as a basis for them to claim common ground and give "continuity…thus acquiring a sense of permanence and legitimacy."[48] Friedrich Meinecke in the early twentieth century simply stated, "A nation is a community that wishes to be a nation."[49]

Trust plays an important role in the "wish to live together." People tend to trust others who more closely resemble themselves, or who share distinguishing characteristics—whether those are values, behavior, or physical attributes. Language provides a natural identifier, as those who speak a different tongue are instantly perceived as "foreign," "different," "not one of our own," the "Other." Those with a familiar tongue strike a common chord, naturally reinforcing a sense of common ground as opposed to the strange and foreign sounds. A similar tongue also tends to imply a common background or historical experience, giving further ground to account them as "one of our own." A group sharing historical memories or experience tends to give a sense of continuity, a sense that "our people" have been together for a while, "we can

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[46] Schulze, *States, Nations, and Nationalism*, 149.

[47] Ibid., 97.

[48] Ibid., 98.

[49] Berend, *Decades of Crisis*, 55.

trust them," and thus "we have reason to continue together." Claims to the ancient past, whether through national myths or religious traditions, give a sense of permanence and a foundation upon which one may rely. European societies sought common identifiers to unify their people, their *nations*.

As men questioned the legitimacy of their current polity—questioning whether the claim to divine investiture was valid—they discussed how they should re-organize according to the common will of the community, the nation. On which common ground would they associate themselves? "Governments were now obliged to adopt modern political ideologies in order to justify themselves in the eyes of their own people."[50] Technology had facilitated large social movements; governments now found that they needed mass appeal to ensure support from the population. The Western European nations of Great Britain and France, and later Russia, chose the *Verfassungsnation*, a German term meaning a constitutional nation; they organized themselves around a set of principles—an ideology—written in a constitution. Ideologies differed from nation to nation, but constitutional unions were largely based on reason. In contrast, Johann Gottfried Herder in the eighteenth century "pioneered a German national ideology…as embodied in language, poetry, and national costumes."[51] Germany and various other Central and Eastern European nations chose the *Kulturnation*, meaning cultural nation (Herder's term); they organized themselves around a set of shared cultural characteristics, particularly language and commonly shared historical experiences. This was largely based on emotion.

Whether constitutional or cultural in their union, nations now organized themselves according to agreement among themselves, not by instruction from above. The Enlightenment and Romanticism played their roles in glorifying mankind while replacing traditional religion with a faith in the individual; since the estate society based itself on religious sanction, a side-effect was that this new faith rejecting that sanction

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[50] Schulze, *States, Nations, and Nationalism*, 154.

[51] Berend, *Decades of Crisis*, 54.

thus undermined the previous legitimacy of the upper estates in the eyes of the common people. Society needed to be reorganized, setting a new hierarchy in place. Schulze summarized this shift from old to new quite well:

> The idea of the nation had quasi-religious undertones: since a nation has no visible physical presence, it has to be believed in. Nationalism is the secular faith of the industrial age. The new state was not sanctioned by god, but by the nation.[52]

Not all people chose to participate in these new nations, however. In defining the new nation, rising leadership at times claimed land and any people thereon for political and security reasons. A few examples of rejecting a nation's right to rule are easily noted in Northern Ireland, Basque Country, Yugoslavia, the Roma people in Russia and Eastern Europe, and the Northern Caucasus. Russia's Civil War serves as an example of the struggle between old and new forms of society. Yet the very process of integration and consolidation which helped form many of the borders which stand today intermingles various ethnic groups within those borders. Some have gradually assimilated and accepted the new identity, while some cling to the old identity and staunchly remain as independent as they can from the new regime. Youth growing up in mixed societies—especially those with parents from different cultures—find themselves leaning more to one identity or the other, but often blending the two in some hybrid combination.

In modern times, many more recent immigrant groups came to Eurasia from further East, where traditional religion still claimed legitimacy in society. Arriving under various guest worker programs, immigrants were often not allowed to fully assimilate into European or Russian society. They often spoke a different language, observed different traditions, and possessed different physical attributes—they represented a different culture. The resident "Europeans" tended to perceive them as the "Other," treating them poorly and leaving for them the less desirable jobs. A similar scenario unfolds for non-ethnic Russians in Russia today. Both in Eastern and Western Europe, many disenfranchised immigrants find themselves isolated in their own enclaves, possessing a different view of their identity than their hosts—and hence a different set of

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[52] Schulze, *States, Nations, and Nationalism*, 158.

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loyalties. Technology facilitates greater contact with the culture of their home country, allowing them to more easily continue their traditions, maintain their language, and reinforce views foreign to the host nation; in effect, technology allows them to maintain a separate culture. What incentive do they have to attempt to assimilate into a society which appears to reject them? In this context Western ideals come under question of legitimacy: Fine-sounding individual freedom and opportunity somehow are more available to citizens than immigrants. Perceptions of inequality perpetuate tensions among various cultural groups and undermine the trust necessary for people to "wish to live together."

With such tensions present, is it any wonder that individuals seek out others with whom they feel they have more in common and whom they can trust? Considering Europe's history, is it any wonder that secular, nationalist Europeans are appalled at Islamic fundamentalist movements claiming a divine right to rule over others and impose their law upon them? Likewise, how much is Russia willing to allow Islamic fundamentalist movements to spread within her sphere of influence? The recent two Chechen wars indicate that Russia will strive to assert her political authority throughout her realm, rejecting claims of divine right—especially claims from a foreign divinity (Islam versus Russian Orthodox Christianity). As the great mix of people in Europe and Russia search for stability and shared identity in their ever-changing world, how will they respond to perceived threats? Will supranational loyalties survive, or will people fall back on more established national groups? Will national groups splinter into smaller sub-groups? The disintegration Yugoslavia, as that of the Soviet Union, points to the turbulence and confusion following the breakup of society. Trust is the bond which keeps society together—without some degree of faith in each other to facilitate cooperation, society tends to splinter. Social trust is an essential element of permanence in society; when trials test the faith of nations, the closest and strongest bonds last longer than associations of convenience. A glance at the unraveling of the Soviet Union can provide some insight into accompanying consequences of losing faith in one's established identity.

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III. TRUST IN RUSSIAN SOCIETY

A. LATE SOVIET RUSSIA

As the Soviet Empire expanded to encompass new nations, Soviet Communism addressed the issue of communication and unity in society by requiring other nations to speak Russian and follow Moscow's current ideology—in effect imposing Russian culture on other groups. Ethnic schools continued, but the "official language" and ideology dominated society at large. While granting to locals token membership in political organizations, the Kremlin ensured that Russians held the highest positions of power throughout their realm. Lenin's twist to use the title "*Soviet*" (meaning counsel or advice) intended to emphasize government listening to and responding to the people, supposedly transcending nationalism. Yet when power came into play, in practice the body was a paternalistic, centralized Russian Empire—strikingly similar in values and behavior to previous tsarist regimes. Perhaps then it comes as less of a surprise that when the Bear showed itself either unwilling or unable to use its claws to keep the periphery in line, various peoples cast off the "Soviet" identity and strove to revive nationalistic identities under a "national culture" banner. Latvian, Ukrainian, Turkmen…each of the 15 former republics fell back on ethnic and linguistic ties in asserting their new identity. This move to dissociate oneself from the central group reflects a breach of trust, that the promise of a "bright future" went unfulfilled. Lacking a strong incentive to stay, the "wish to live together" having waned, one by one they left. Formal political ties broken, Russians in their midst found themselves in a complex situation wondering whether to return to Mother Russia, to assimilate into the new "nationality," or meander somewhere in between. For the majority of non-ethnic Russians in breakaway regions, with the old identity gone, so were concepts of loyalty to the old group. The calls for independence had sounded the death knell for Communist dreams of international movements spanning language and culture.

The fall of the Soviet Union resulted in a loss of the Russian Empire's periphery, cutting at its national pride, while inner squabbling, selfishness, and corruption crippled

the former powerful state. While the Soviet Union was not perfect, society in Russia enjoyed greater law and order under its rule than in the turbulent "reform" years of the 1990s. Lawlessness destroyed hope and faith in one another, while some enriched themselves at the expense of others. In the rubble of dashed dreams, some in Russian society began to express preference for an autocrat over chaos, explaining to some degree why the Russian nation is willing to tolerate less-than-democratic actions by their government as a means to restore law and order. As trust is a reliance on the ability and willingness of another, such negative experiences shaped poor expectations within Russian society. These unfortunate circumstances have alienated many Russians from each other and driven social trust further downward; in this context new Russian security elites have striven to employ technology to portray the perception of strong leadership able to restore stability, justice, and the Russian sense of greatness.

To ascertain general trust in society, one must first consider trends of trust between individuals; social trust is the cumulative public faith in one another and the society's institutions. Sociology has not yet discovered a simple way to measure trust—whether cubic units of faith filling the heart, or the weight and density level of confidence's mass—yet reflections of trust or distrust are readily apparent. In common speech people use terms to describe degrees of trust such as, "How far can you trust him?" (3 meters, or 20? Would you touch him with a 10-foot pole?) "The old friends enjoyed a deep trust." (20,000 leagues under the sea?) In the Russian language, *vera* means faith, and *doverie* means trust; "*do-*" here means "up to," or that trust is confidence in another up to the point of faith. The symbolism here signifies that faith is an absolute trust, the highest and most reliable confidence—a reflection on the values of the ancient Russians. These concepts are perceivable in the traditional Russian Orthodox teachings that one can have faith in God because He will ultimately keep His word. People are imperfect and at times (some more than others) may fall short of these ideals; wisdom shimmers in the Russian saying "*Doverjai, no proverjai*" (trust, but verify). While perhaps difficult to precisely measure trust, much of the time a person can with fair confidence say whether or not he trusts a particular individual or group—or under what circumstances he would trust them to a certain degree. As far as measuring society's

cumulative faith or trust in one another, polls tend to be the accepted forum for measuring the general degree of public confidence. Polls may be subjective by measuring opinion, but without cubic units of faith or confidence's mass, it is the best they can do. Polls can be worthwhile to indicate trends when the sample size is large enough and demographic considerations carefully guide the categorization of data, but the information gleaned still needs a proper cultural context for accurate interpretation.

Trust is confidence in another, believing they will act according to their word or use good judgment in their decisions. Through interaction people refine their perceptions of one another, which can facilitate developing a deeper, mutual trust. Without direct experience, one tends to rely on perceptions of a group image. As humans remember their past, previous infractions (whether real or imagined) need resolution to justify calming their fears. "Trust is not a character trait so much as it is a response to circumstances, knowledge and experience."[53] Just as a living rose, a person's willingness to trust is dynamic, responding to its environment. Looking beyond a few personal relationships, a society must collectively create an environment conducive to trust if it wishes to enjoy cooperation.

Under Soviet culture, Russian society was aware of its environment and perceived the corruption in their midst. Communist dictates demanded quotas; to hedge risk—and save for a rainy day—common practice inflated production numbers in order to stash away resources for local leverage or personal gain. Russian society responded to supply shortfalls and economic hardship by generally accepting a slight bending of rules as an understandable means for survival, yet society held unwritten norms against excessive greediness. As the Russian saying goes, *Esli ne zapreshcheno, to razresheno.*" (If it is not forbidden, then it is authorized.) In other words, common opinion believed it was acceptable to help oneself, provided one did not overdo it to the detriment of the common good. Communist requirements for public displays of loyalty met an overall responsive public, if only because that public depended on the government for their sustenance and security, and feared retribution for disobedience. Many hoped for Communism's "bright

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[53] Secor, "Social and Political Trust," 6.

future" while recognizing its current imperfections; hence one may portray public support of the state's propaganda as more of a support for the future than an embrace of the present. Since public dissidence received harsh punishment, and political police Committee of State Security (KGB) presence together with its informants seemed ever prevalent, as a practical matter society tended to say in public what was required for self preservation. At home and among close friends, however, they may quietly discuss their true opinions—but only with great care.

These social conditions help explain why social trust in Russia tended to be low. Close, personal interaction developed a greater sense of trust among family and close friends based on experience. However, people tended to rely on the perception of group image beyond their close circle of trust. Every established institution required government sanction and oversight; there was no free civil society—Lenin made sure that no one could form free groups as he and his intelligentsia friends had done, lest those groups go on to do other things like they had done, such as attempt to overthrow the regime. That conservative approach lasted much of the duration of the Soviet Union. The Soviet group image entailed a simple line: Say what the Party wants to hear (*or else!*). Was public rhetoric sincere or merely necessary for self preservation? A dual personality emerged to deal with state propaganda versus reality; Russian society portrayed a public personality at work and on the street, yet had a more true, private personality at home and among trusted friends. Aware to some degree of the government's past record, the public was wary of its promises or the "official story" and generally understood that most aspects of their society were centrally managed. Hollow propaganda crafted a semblance of public support which lacked both life and efficacy. It is understandable that with this perception of society, Russians tended to rely on established personal relationships more than government institutions, trusting rumors more than official data or statements.

Manuel M. Davenport made this insightful comment about human nature: "A person whose continued existence depends upon deceiving himself and others cannot be trusted to execute assigned duties or to provide truthful reports which are subjectively

unpleasant or harmful."[54] In public perception, people see the world through their own eyes, or in other words, they tend to project their positive values and attributes on those whom they view favorably, and project their negative values and attributes on those whom they dislike. Perhaps as a phenomenon of mirror imaging, trustworthy individuals tend to be more trusting of others while those who are cunning tend to suspect others of cunning. Not only do internal values act as a guide to behavior, but social norms also influence perception and behavior:

> Psychological and survey research confirms that social trust acts as a constraint on immoral behavior. People who believe others are trustworthy, are themselves less likely to lie, cheat, or steal.[55]

Witnessing or hearing of multiple examples of certain behavior reinforces the perception that it is widespread, perhaps even to a degree accepted as a social norm. However, if a negative behavior is widespread, that does not make it inherently healthy for society— just as a widespread disease does not promote good health. As a body weakens from disease, there is a point when the disease can no longer be ignored or concealed.

The subdued and quietly whispered perceptions of inadequacy and even corruption in the Communist system were long present in Russian society, and at last found an outlet in the late 1980s under *glasnost'*. In 1984 Mikhail Gorbachev and fellow Communist Edvard Shevardnadze agreed that "everything is rotten" and "it's no longer possible to live this way."[56] Gorbachev soon rose to the powerful position General Secretary in 1985. As part of reforms intended to reinvigorate the stagnant and inefficient Soviet economy, while reining in the KGB, he granted greater freedom of speech under the title of *glasnost'*, or "openness" (*golos* means voice, hence *glasnost'* relates to public expression). Open the floodgates it did: After the initial trickle to test the system, a river of criticism burst into the press, expressing long-held beliefs and confirming many once-quiet views held by others. The good and the bad of the past and present came to the forefront in Russian media. While this *glasnost'* encouraged more

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[54] Davenport, *What We Do in Private.*

[55] Rothstein, "Trust," 21.

[56] Malia, *The Soviet Tragedy*, 411.

honesty—which is essential for social trust—the cumulative honest opinions of Russian society began to call into question the competency and eventually the very legitimacy of Soviet rule.

> Glasnost and the easing of restrictions on foreign travel destroyed the state's tight control of the media and ended the Soviet's people's isolation not only from life "outside" the USSR but also from many broader truths about past and present life "inside."…People "knew" far more than they had previously, and this "influenced what they believed, valued and trusted."[57]

> The outpouring of new information contravened the standard version of Soviet history—the heroic fable by which citizens had lived—and undermined people's sense that they were reasonably well-off compared to the average citizen in the capitalist world….Tens of millions of individuals were forced to confront a revised history that excavated Stalin's crimes, rehabilitated Khrushchev, redefined Brezhnev's "developed socialism" as "stagnation," and eventually went after Lenin and the foundational myths of the USSR and Soviet-style socialism.[58]

Since the government had organized most aspects of society and stood at its center, when the government's legitimacy came under question, the whole social order itself began to unravel. Social pressures led to an opportunity in the early 1990s for Russian society to reorganize itself.

B.   POST-SOVIET RUSSIA

Russia approached this new opportunity to reorganize still carrying many of the established perceptions and norms which it had formed over the years, reshaping them along the way. The ability to speak more freely was a welcome and promising breath of fresh air; but as turbulence in the economy struck at home and some began to take advantage of others, turbulent winds buffeted society's sense of trust. Former Soviet *nomenklatura* members had known the lie and deceived the people; could they be trusted now? Disillusionment had set in, and people were wary of any political leadership because many figures were former Communists speaking a new party line.

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[57] Connor, "Soviet Society," 74-75.

[58] Ibid., 78-79.

As some Russians strove to rebuild a more positive society, other Russians struggled for power and influence—or mere material gains. Crime and violence rose while *vzjatki* (bribes) undermined social trust. When victims pointed to misbehavior in their midst, law enforcement on the take was sluggish to respond; when the demands of justice were not met, frustration with the new system grew. After a length of time, almost a "trial period" of their new society, a string of negative perceptions about law enforcement corroded faith in the new system while people compared their current world with memories of law and order in the not-so-distant past. To many, the "good ole days" seemed better. Was it just a misperception? Numerous crimes mysteriously went unpunished, reinforcing the view. Nicholas Eberstadt revealed a disturbing trend: "As for mortality attributed to injury—murder, suicide, traffic, poisoning, and other violent causes—age-adjusted levels for men and women alike more than doubled between 1965 and 2001."[59] Overall death rates spiked in the mid-1990s, almost twice that of just ten years prior, while the birth rate cut in half. The result was—and still is—a declining population.

> In Italy—the poster child in many current discussions of a possible depopulation of Europe—there are today about 103 deaths for every live 100 births. Russia, by contrast, reports *over 170 deaths* for every 100 births.[60]

Criminal activity and violence, alcoholism, and economic instability impacted not only the population's numbers, but created an environment which impeded society's willingness to trust one another.

While individual actors or groups may engage in violence for their own purposes, if the government in essence sanctions their actions through its inaction—not seeking to enforce the rule of law upon them—then the government by its decision (or indecision) has effectively supported and condoned the violence. Russian society at large still held to a belief stretching back through Soviet times into the tsarist period: "*Tsar—khoroshij, a mestnye rukovoditeli—plokhie.*" (The Tsar is good, but local officials are bad.) Russian

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[59] Eberstadt, "Russia's Demographic Straightjacket."

[60] Ibid.

society *wanted* to believe in their system, *wanted* to believe in their leadership, but sought for ways to reconcile their hope with the reality of their local experience. Russians perceived they lacked recourse to the law because they felt they could not trust local law enforcement. Reminiscent of Soviet times, in this new system *ugrozy* (threats) kept people in line: Those who complained had cause to fear repercussions, whether from the state or from the Russian mafia. Responding to these negative social conditions, people lost faith in the system and in each other.

Additional inconducive conditions cast a shadow over social trust. Islamic fundamentalism in the Caucasus tore apart society in southern Russia. Devastation from war in 1994-1996 and again in 1999-present left the region crippled and dysfunctional. The Russian Army's poor performance reduced its credibility in the eyes of its citizens and foreign governments alike. "Terrorist attacks" in Russia's heartland by Islamic fundamentalists—most often associated with Chechnya—raised society's doubts about the ability of its new government to provide adequate protection, and also widened the fissure between nationalities within Russia's borders. Whom could they trust? In an attempt to maintain some visage of a positive self image, many began to re-draw lines of where shared identity began and where it ended. "Russians would not hurt their own," they would tell themselves, "Those who did this were not Russian. They were Chechen." Gone was the common identity of "Soviet;" now was the redefining of *who* people were, who was friend and who was foe—defining the "Other." Half a decade saw two wars with many atrocities committed by both sides. In October 2002 Russia witnessed hostage taking in the Moscow Theater and a bungled operation leaving well over a hundred innocent Russians dead. In September 2004 they watched in horror as terrorists seized hundreds of children on the first day of school in Beslan, ending in a bloody massacre. In October 2005 they saw another rampage of terrorists in Nalchik in Kabardino-Balkaria…these are just a few of the events stunning Russian society. Separatist movements, including militant Islam in Dagestan and Ingushetia, further strained relations. The Soviet Union had unraveled, the old order had come undone; but where would change stop? Already the territory losses from the now 14 "independent

republics" reduced the Russian Empire down to a size not seen since Peter the Great. Movements pulling in various directions further threatened peace and territorial integrity.

Together with this atmosphere of uncertainty, economic instability plagued the nation. Clever privatization actions largely concentrated holdings in the hands of a relative minority within society, many of which came to be called the Russian Oligarchs because of their de facto influence and rule in political matters. Elements of the black market quickly formed into the Russian mafia and expanded their extortion operations, while their street gangs killed each other over freshly dominated turf. Law enforcement was not a worry to them, because handy *vzjatki* kept the police from meaningful interference. Another cumulative effect of the disorder was that of tax evasion. As oligarchs amassed possessions, in order to maximize profits they conveniently ignored sharing their windfall with their fellow citizens through taxation. The government— undermined by *vzjatki* and *ugrozy*—grew weak and impotent, to the point that the Russian Treasury was unable to consistently pay salaries of government workers, whether in the remnants of government-controlled factories, mines, or in the military. This inability was not reflected in a missed a payday or two, but in some cases workers went without for half a year or more. Under such circumstances, understandably they had to resort to other means for survival—but not all chose honorable means. The economic crisis was part of a greater social crisis, one in which the stress and strain on society was exacerbated by misbehavior. That is not to say that all were bad or wicked, no, far from it—many resisted the temptations to take advantage of others. Many Russians in the face of severe challenges continued to uphold worthy standards and do the best they could under difficult circumstances. Unfortunately many other Russians chose the easier path of temptation and corruption. Inflation rocketed, and the gap between rich and poor grew ever wider while disillusionment with the new "capitalist" system set in. Waves of emigrants marked various low-points in Russia's transitionary period, as telling as rings of a tree. One such ring etched into Russia's wood after the financial collapse in August 1998, when Israel recorded a massive increase in Russian immigrants. Over the course of a decade, a drawn-out exodus of millions departed Mother Russia in search of a better life.

The progress of a nation needs to be measured on a large scale for proper perspective, yet human tendency is to focus on the here-and-now. Yury Levada, director of the Russian Center for Public Opinion Research (VTsIOM), made an insightful comment in 2003:

> Public opinion (judging, for example, from a poll taken in October 2002) usually focuses on painful problems and losses, such as the breakup of the Soviet Union or the fall in living standards, and pays less attention to such achievements as the surmounting of the "scarcity" economy, or the newly gained economic and political freedoms.[61]

This insight comes from having conducted surveys of Russian society under a thaw in President Brezhnev's time; Levada's discoveries cost him his career, but under President Gorbachev's *glasnost'* he was reinstated. In contrast to the insider survey, Andrei Shleifer and Daniel Treisman used a United Nations survey to claim that corruption in Russia was "about average." However, considering the residual Soviet mindset fearing informers and government retribution for expression, with a current fear of mafia together with the Russian xenophobic stance toward a foreign entity gathering information, one must question the validity of the UN's survey. Shleifer and Treisman continued, "Looking at crime in general, the reported victimization rate in Russia is not particularly high."[62] The key word here is *reported*. Many crimes go unreported because people generally perceive the police to be corrupt and people naturally fear repercussions by the Russian mafia (note death rates above). As Nadia Diuk, Director of Central Europe and Eurasia Programs at the National Endowment for Democracy, reported from polling Russia's "next generation" (those 18 to 36 years old): "Nongovernmental organizations also got a high mistrust rating (60.1 percent)—only the Duma (62.8 percent), the police (67.6 percent), and [political] parties scored worse."[63] This could explain why public perception of crime in Russia is much higher than Russia's officially reported statistics, and why UN survey results appear lower than the common perspective.

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[61] Levada, "Limits and Options."

[62] Shleifer and Treisman, "A Normal Country."

[63] Diuk, "The Next Generation."

Those who remained through the turbulent 1990s were generally willing to accept greater government control in order to curb the lawlessness of the "democracy" free-for-all. While at times the lines blurred between new Russian politicians, Russian mafia, law enforcement, and the Federal Security Service (FSB – largely comprised of former KGB agents), a formal structure associated with the strict order of the past still held higher esteem. Mikhail Tsypkin provided insightful comparison when he noted:

> In March 2002, only 33.7 percent of Russians polled said that they trusted the Federation Council, while 52.5 percent trusted the FSB. In October 2002, the State Duma enjoyed the trust of only 25.2 percent of the public while the FSB, according to the same survey, was trusted by 40.9 percent.[64]

In the new polity, the FSB continued to operate with relative impunity under the cover of secrecy, together with other state security services enjoying a convenient lack of transparency. Reporting remained largely vertical, direct to either the executive branch or to the president himself. When Russian President Vladimir Putin assumed ever more the singular sovereignty of a tsar by consolidating his control over government, Russian society appeared to greet this control as a relief from the chaos of the experiment with "democracy."

This social support for greater control was most readily seen in the younger generation who were adolescents when the Soviet Union began to unravel, who were too young to remember what it was like living under the iron fist of a state security apparatus not accountable to the people. As Diuk reported from polling Russia's "next generation" in the fall of 2002:

> Support for Putin—measured by counting those who said that they 'trust[ed him] completely' and those who said that they 'trust[ed him] somewhat'—was 81.2 percent. This presidential-trust score among young Russians was surpassed only by the trust scores of educational establishments (88 percent) and friends and relatives (91.1 percent and 94.3 percent, respectively). The media—which most outside observers regard as far from independent or objective—did surprisingly well, with a

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64 Tsypkin, "Russia's Failure," 82.

trust score of 66.8 percent. Political parties ranked lowest on the trust list: Fully 78 percent of young Russians said that they mistrusted parties either somewhat or completely.[65]

The youth had limited experience from which to draw. What had they seen? Childhood memories of Soviet stability turned to turbulent lawlessness and the corruption of "democracy" (remember the *vzjatki* and *ugrozy*); this explains the high distrust of the Duma, police, and political parties. Along came strong-man Putin who was fighting the Chechen terrorists and hunting down the selfish oligarchs who had enriched themselves at society's expense. The Tsar is good, but local officials…. Putin's ratings continued strong as time went on. As the United States engaged their Global War on Terror in 2001 and later invaded Iraq in 2003, the oil market shifted; coincidentally Russian sales of oil and natural gas also rose, marking an upswing in the Russian economy which has continued to rise ever since (and the United States is still fighting in Iraq).[66] The increased affluence was conveniently attributed to the man in power at the time, none other than President Putin. Whether a sound correlation or not, the "next generation" of Russians associated state control with law and order—and subsequent wealth—giving state security a positive image in the rising generation's perception.

Aside from the politicians and police, what would explain the distrust of nongovernmental organizations? Moscow had not allowed free civil society under the Soviet Union, so the Western-style associations were a relatively new experiment for Russia. Old perceptions and low social trust did not change overnight; instead they carried over into the new day. Julie Hemment explained an important perception lingering in Russian society:

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[65] Diuk, "The Next Generation."

[66] "Consider the income from one component alone—crude oil exports. Roughly eight and a half years ago—on February 11, 1999—the price of Urals oil was less than $9.00 a barrel. Russia was producing barely 6 million barrels a day. Today, the price is $87.00, and Russia produces nearly 10 million barrels a day. Almost every drop of the increased output has been shipped abroad to the world market. Look at the difference. In the first three months of 1999, crude oil export revenues totaled barely $2 billion. Right now, Russia earns that much in crude exports in less than a week." Testimony before U.S. Congress by Gaddy, *U.S.-Russia Economic Relationship*, 2-3.

During the Soviet period, obshchestvennaia rabota (societal work) signified enforced, party-mandated activity. Each person was required to undertake extra-curricular activities on behalf of the Komsomol (Communist youth organization) or the party. An individual's performance in this area influenced the distribution of perks and privileges, affecting professional advancement. This has resulted in a deep mistrust of both formal and informal politics and collective engagement in the post-socialist period.[67]

This view of how centrally organized and mandated social associations suppress social trust reflects the importance of personal experience and *perceptions of choice* in trust. The decision to trust considers good works and good will. How can an individual or group gain confidence in others when their "good will" is required for advancement in society, or when their actions are directed? Such experience alone cannot convince that an individual is trustworthy or genuinely interested in the welfare of others. While *obshchestvennaja rabota* may have been organized with good intentions to benefit society, by mandating participation the good will factor was largely neutralized. These experiences tainted the perception of Russian society's group image.

In describing the common group image under the Communist polity in Russia and beyond, Ronald F. Inglehart in his research on culture and democracy noted that, "A heritage of communist rule also seems to have an impact on this variable [of interpersonal trust], with virtually all ex-communist societies ranking relatively low."[68] Why would that be so? He resorts to previous research to explain: "As Putnam (1993) has argued, horizontal, locally controlled organizations are conducive to interpersonal trust; rule by large, hierarchical, centralized bureaucracies seems to corrode interpersonal trust."[69] Demonstrating this continuing group image long after the fall of the Soviet Union, and revealing how the turbulent times of post-Communism alienated many Russians from each other, the Russian Public Chamber issued a report in early 2007 reflecting a further dwindling of social trust. As Editor of Profile Magazine Georgy Bovt recounted:

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[67] Hemment, "The Riddle of the Third Sector," footnote 18.

[68] Harrison and Huntington, *Culture Matters*, 90.

[69] Ibid., 91.

Between 1991 and 2006, the number of respondents who said other people could be trusted dropped from 41 percent to 22 percent. The number who said they were "wary" of others was an alarming 74 percent. Asked, 'Where would you look for help in the event of a serious problem?' 83 percent answered "immediate relatives." Four percent said they would turn to an NGO, while only a slightly larger number said they would turn to a government agency.[70]

Under such circumstances, the Russian term *svoi* takes on particular meaning—one can only rely on "one's own."

C.   A NEW RUSSIA, OR OLD?

Old habits linger just as perceptions do. Thomas A. Koelbe observed, "Individuals follow routines. They follow well-worn paths and do what they think is expected of them."[71] They do so in order to gain "access to collective goods in exchange for fulfilling obligations."[72] Many presumed that Russians would embrace their new opportunity to thrive in a market economy, throwing off the inefficient chains of Soviet centralization. In reality, the past was not distant enough; habits and mindsets acquired under Soviet rule continued to influence the present. Ruth C. May, Sheila M. Puffer, and Daniel J. McCarthy combined to produce a report in 2005 covering the ten-year experience of the Rayter Group's cross-cultural training of Russian managers. Their observations support other reports of social behavior and cultural mindset:

> Objectives under the Soviet system…required meeting centrally mandated plans rather than operating profitably. These goals led them to focus on meeting planned targets and protecting their enterprises and positions. They were masters of circumventing rules and directives and worked in underhanded ways by hoarding materials and labor and concealing and manipulating information. Their behaviors reflected a lack of trust, a disdain for measures and controls, real numbers, and truthful reports, as well as a lack of respect for laws they saw as senseless. Their lack of trust, for instance, stemmed from the highly arbitrary, punitive conditions of the communist and tsarist periods.[73]

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[70] Bovt, "Sociology with a Smile."

[71] Migdal, *State in Society*, 146.

[72] Ibid., 146.

[73] May, Puffer and McCarthy, "Transferring Management Knowledge to Russia," 26.

One must remember that when the name of the country changed in 1991, the people were still the same. Perceptions and behavior take time to change; more importantly, creatures of habit need incentives to change them.

Many of the Russian Oligarchs had amassed their wealth by 1997 when Stephen Holmes noted, "Moscow, a sparkling enclave that misleads foreign observers, also symbolizes the total disregard of the Russian rich for the Russian poor."[74] A Russian saying states, "*Derevnja kormit Moskvu.*" (The countryside feeds Moscow.) This describes in common tongue how resources flow to Moscow, where the wealth of the nation is concentrated. Technology and wealth has flowed into Russia, but they are not evenly distributed. In 2004 Zbigniew Brzezinski added, "Moscow has been and remains the privileged beneficiary of modernization and development. In contrast, other Russian cities continue to stagnate and the Russian countryside remains largely reminiscent of the days of Tolstoy."[75] The World Bank reports 2005 poverty rates in Russia as 15.7% in urban areas and 30.4% in rural areas.[76] Bo Rothstein observed:

> In societies with high levels of economic inequality…neither the rich nor the poor have a sense of shared fate with the other. Generalized trust is low while particularized (or in-group) trust can be high. In turn, each group looks out for its own interests and is likely to see the demands of the other as conflicting with their own well-being. Society is seen as a zero-sum game between conflicting groups.[77]

How is economic inequality viewed in modern Russia? Rothstein reported, "While most Westerners believe that the path to wealth stems from hard work, 80 percent of Bulgarians, Hungarians, and Russians say that high income reflects dishonesty."[78] Holmes describes the oligarch's group image thus:

> Why are pensioners, veterans, and former Chernobyl cleanup workers infuriated by rumors that their welfare entitlements are soon to be reduced even further for budgetary reasons? …they do not relish being advised to

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[74] Holmes, "What Russia Teaches Us Now."

[75] Brzezinski, "Moscow's Mussolini."

[76] Jomo, *Flat World*, 229.

[77] Rothstein, "All for All," 8-9.

[78] Ibid., 28.

tighten their belts, to give up, say, their pension benefits on which they counted their whole working lives, by unscrupulous apparatchiks who recently became windfall millionaires through insider-giveaways of assets that once ostensibly belonged to all and who are now surreptitiously stashing Russia's investable resources in Cypriot banks. The roots of post-communist popular discontent lie less in deplorable habits of dependency than in accurate perceptions of betrayal.[79]

These perceptions are based on a sense of injustice, largely in that those entrusted with the country's resources have taken advantage of weakness in the system for their own enrichment, leaving the majority to suffer. The "helping hand" of government turned out to be more of a "grabbing hand." Considering the polls, Levada commented, "Over the past few years, including 2002, the public consciousness of Russian citizens has inclined towards the view that the government is unable to cope with the country's problems, to ensure economic growth, raise living standards, ensure law and order or stand up to crime."[80] In early 2007 Forbes released a list of the world's wealthiest; Russia now ranks third in the world for its large number of billionaires, only trailing the United States and Germany.[81] Russia still possesses immense natural resources and has the means for all its citizens to live well; however, the thousands of Russian girls sold into human trafficking each year stand in stark contrast to notions of economic equality. Social trust cannot flourish when individuals enrich themselves by enslaving their fellow citizens, whether physically or by financial bondage, *and do so with impunity*. Once again the public perception is that the elite enjoy privilege while the common masses eke out a living.

How can a society reverse negative perceptions? Game theory has contributed some worthwhile observations pertinent to social behavior. The 1950 Rand Corporation's classic Prisoner's Dilemma—devised for considering possible scenarios for nuclear strategy—raised the question of whether two individuals would cooperate or defect when faced with risk. If both prisoners cooperate with each other ("stick to the story"), they both serve six months; if they both defect ("betray the accomplice"), they

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[79] Holmes, "What Russia Teaches Us Now."

[80] Levada, "Limits and Options."

[81] Forbes, "The World's Billionaires," and Forbes, "The World's Richest People."

both serve two years. However, if one cooperates while the other defects, he who betrays walks free while the "sucker" serves ten years. The greatest advantage for all comes from cooperating, but can they trust each other to not fall to temptation and betray, one gaining freedom at the other's expense? If there is only one event to decide, the safe wager is to defect—just in case the other fellow also defects. Under the Iterated Prisoner's Dilemma, the two choose over and over whether to cooperate or defect, remembering how the other acted in the past. Robert Axelrod in his 1984 work entitled *The Evolution of Cooperation* recounts how in a computer tournament involving a wide variety of competing strategies, the simple Tit-for-Tat strategy was very successful in achieving cooperation; it merely begins with cooperation then repeats the choice of the other fellow from the previous move. A slightly more successful strategy was Tit-for-Tat with Forgiveness, which sometimes cooperates even when the other fellow defects.

Follow-on tournaments by various scholars determined that forgiveness and generosity were very successful in environments where there was a limited degree of imperfection (allowing for miscommunication or slight error in interactions), yet in environments higher in inconsistency it was better to be stingy for the sake of survival.[82] This conclusion resonates with common sense and underscores the influence of social context on behavior. Multiple simulations involving a variety of strategies concluded that retaliation was essential to avert exploitation, yet forgiveness was critical to avoid cycles of revenge. The lesson here is that a government should strive to create a more predictable, cooperative environment in order for its members to develop long-term, productive relationships; since the rule of will varies in its seemingly arbitrary course, the sense of predictability and "fairness" comes through the rule of law. Charles Wheelan provides a simple description of this risk calculation in economic terms: "Individuals and firms will make investments only when they are guaranteed to reap what they sow, literally or figuratively."[83] Placing trust in another is often like making an investment, a matter of placing one's welfare or even one's person in a vulnerable position, relying on the other's good faith. Are there enough substantiated reasons to take the risk? What is

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[82] Stanford Philosophy, *Prisoner's Dilemma* (Iteration with Error).

[83] Wheelan, *Naked Economics*, 54.

the likelihood of a reasonable return? In Russia's case, *vzjatki* continue to undermine society's sense of order, because events tend to turn out not according to the law, but according to who is able to buy off whom.   In such an unstable, unpredictable environment it is better to not take chances, which of course is not conducive to building social trust.

IV.   TECHNOLOGY INFLUENCING SOCIETY

A.   SHAPING OPINIONS

To restore some degree of law and order and revive society's trust in Russia's government, Putin and his compatriot *siloviki*—from the word *sila*, or power, thus meaning those associated with the state's security apparatus—moved into positions of power and began to concentrate their authority in the upper government institutions. This was essentially a reversal of Gorbachev's move just over decade earlier when he reduced the KGB's power as part of encouraging *glasnost'*. The instruments of statecraft, also known as instruments of national power, are diplomacy, economy, information, and military.   The new *siloviki* rulers began to assert their influence in each realm, consolidating power into their own hands.   Technology proved most useful in the information realm, as it allowed a certain degree of control over the media; hence they strove to control technology directing the flow of information in order to reshape expectations among the Russian population. Television was the most prevalent advanced medium, with radio and newspapers providing a widespread alternative. *Siloviki* ensured either direct control over the handful of domestic television stations, or that their owners were loyal to the Kremlin's new masters.   Intimidation and closure of several radio stations and newspaper outlets served as an effective public example to keep the rest in line.

A government's "official story" is their version of events, supposedly truthful; yet when cross-checks are not allowed, one begins to wonder whether they have something to hide. Engaging in a campaign of selective truth—that is, portraying favorable portions of a story while suppressing unfavorable ones—amounts to a campaign of propaganda, because the filter to determine favorable versus unfavorable certainly holds an objective, a purpose for selecting which information would shape the opinions of the target audience in a particular way. It is this form of propaganda which *siloviki* have employed in reshaping public images. The official story is the chosen or sometimes crafted version

which they would have their audience believe; suppressing counter versions reduces impact on the official story's appearance of credibility, thus ensuring a more likely reception. A government portrayed in a positive light, fighting for the people, would garner greater public support in the long run as long as their positive image tended to dominate. Russian information campaigns during the recent Chechen Wars illustrate how the use of communications technology and carefully crafted messages can shape public opinion.

The First War in Chechnya of 1994-1996 saw many international journalists reporting from the battlefield. Portraying the Chechens as the victimized underdog, "freedom fighters" against an evil imperialist giant, many journalists often communicated atrocities committed by Russian forces; in order to maintain access to Chechen sources, at times they downplayed atrocities committed by Chechen rebels. The result was growing international support for the separatist region and condemnation against harsh Russian tactics. The truth of the matter was that both sides committed horrific acts, responding to one another in a vicious cycle of vengeance knowing few morals and virtually no mercy. Lacking the political will to continue the fight, Russia eventually withdrew its forces and granted autonomy to Chechnya. Russia had lost the information war.

Russia was not to repeat this mistake in the Second War in Chechnya of 1999-present. Putin, a former KGB agent, understood the importance of information. When in August 1999 Shamil Basaev launched raids from Chechnya into neighboring Dagestan, the new Russian leadership interpreted them as a threat to Russia's territorial integrity. Mysterious apartment bombings the following month gave the Russian government the popular support needed to take action; Putin accused Chechen forces of the bombing, labeled Chechen rebels as "terrorists" and sent in Russian forces. The shift from labels such as "separatists" or "rebels" to the more extreme label "terrorist" effectively portrayed Chechens in a darker light. Unlike the First Chechen War, the Chechens would not receive the international journalist support as before—Russia severely limited access to the battlefield, effectively silencing much of the potential independent reporting as

well as many pro-Chechen voices.[84] What one does not see can be just as important as what one does see; for both the Russians and the international community, Chechen "freedom fighters" were out of sight and out of mind, while a barrage of anti-Chechen "terrorist" coverage focused on Chechen atrocities. The advantages of technology for disseminating information were concentrated in the *siloviki's* hands.

In this context two years to the month after Putin labeled Chechens as "terrorists," in the wake of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States, Putin was the first to call President George Bush to offer support against terrorists.[85] The U.S. in turn toned down its rhetoric against humanitarian issues in Chechnya. The following month Putin claimed bin Laden was aiding Chechen rebels, placing them in the group newly labeled Public Enemy No. 1 for peace-loving democracies worldwide. November 2001 Bush and Putin met to work together against the identified common foe. Bush stated, "Russia and America share the same threat and the same resolve. We will fight and defeat terrorist networks wherever they exist."[86] Putin added, "Any military action is accompanied not only by the military resistance, but also an information resistance."[87] Putin understood the value of using available tools to shape opinions and expectations. Whereas America's free press would continue to report as it pleased, Russia's press ever more reflected the official story as told by its new government. Mutual support was not in word alone, but also in deed; Russia did not protest when America began to operate military bases in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. Seeing the Taliban as a common foe, Russia provided other material support for U.S. operations against Al Qaeda and the Taliban. In exchange, America increased information sharing with Russia and more openly supported Russia's actions in Chechnya.

United against terrorists around the globe, sharing more intelligence and geographic access than ever before, the former Cold War enemies appeared as close allies in a War on Terror which was making marked progress against identified terrorists.

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[84] Oldberg, *War on Terrorism*, 21.

[85] The White House, *President Bush and President Putin*.

[86] PBS, *Presidents Bush and Putin*.

[87] Ibid.

There was little international discussion of oppressed Taliban "devoted individuals;" instead there was condemnation of Taliban "extremists." There was little mention of Chechen "separatists" or "freedom fighters;" instead a vicious war was waged against the Chechen "terrorists." Media frequently flashed images of previous terrible "terrorist" acts to reinforce the idea that action against them was necessary. Operations increased in Afghanistan and Chechnya, as did reports of enemy captured or killed in action. All seemed to be going well, then something changed. The allies disagreed on some labeling.

When the United States included Iraq in its rhetoric against terrorism, Russia disapproved of such rhetoric while still linking Chechens to "international terrorists." The United States continued on a unilateral path to war with Iraq, but Russia continued its focus on its own domestic terrorists. As Russia increased pressure in Chechnya, Islamic fundamentalists and Chechen rebels resorted to more dramatic and horrific civilian targeting. This played into the Russian media's labeling Chechens as terrorists and a serious threat to peace and stability. The Moscow Theater hostage taking in October 2002, two female suicide bombers at a rock concert in July 2003, four at a Moscow commuter train at Essentuki station in December 2003, two in the Moscow subway in February 2004, two more aboard two aircraft in flight in August 2004, the Beslan School hostage taking and massacre in September 2004, Black Widows, Nalchik in Kabardino-Balkaria in October 2005, and various other atrocities in Chechnya were gruesome acts qualifying as terrorist attacks and gave ample ammunition to the Russian propaganda campaign. The Kremlin state had seized de facto control over the three main television stations in Russia, intimidated contrary journalists (while several were mysteriously murdered), and harassed or closed non-compliant newspapers.[88] Alternative sources of information were limited: in 1998 only 1% of the Russian population had access to the internet; in 2006 roughly 16% of the population had access.[89] The Russian government was able to effectively select which stories to tell and

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[88] "Rossiya and Channel One are owned by the state, while NTV was taken from a Kremlin critic in 2001 and now belongs to Gazprom." See Kramer, "50% Good News Is the Bad News."

[89] Bigg, "Cybercrime Epidemic."

which to suppress; images and stories repeated over and over, reinforcing the desired perception among the target audience. As the Russian saying teaches, "*Povtorenie—mat' uchenija*" (repetition is the mother of learning). As a result Russian public sentiment tended to accept government actions against the Chechen terrorist threat; overall international support for the Chechens remained low. This time Russia's information war was much more successful.

While some Chechen rebels certainly qualified for the terrorist label, not all Chechen rebels employed terrorist tactics and not all Chechens were rebels; but the labeling had an effect of polarizing Russians against Chechens. Sharing the identity of the group, each member seemed to also share in the responsibility of other member's actions. Guilt by association played its role. Other actions by the Russian government tended to show this labeling as politically convenient at the time. Chechen separatists were terrorists, but just across the border in Georgia the Abkhazian separatists were separatists and enjoyed Russian support—to include Russian troops stationed in Abkhazia as well as Russian diplomatic pressure on Georgia. South Ossetia separatists also enjoyed a Russian label of separatists. The groups Hamas and Hezbollah were labeled by the United States as terrorist organizations, yet Russia did not label them so; on the contrary, when Hamas gained greater popular support and position in the Palestinian government, Russia invited Hamas leaders to Moscow for political discussion while the international community largely denounced their declared intent to destroy Israel.[90] Are Hamas terrorists or freedom fighters? Are Chechens terrorists or freedom fighters? As far as perception goes, the answer lies in the labeling. Beauty—or ugliness—is in the eye of the beholder. Some Chechen rebel groups have now aligned themselves with Moscow; eager to show progress in the region, Russia now labels them as legitimate political and security groups.[91]

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[90] Khrestin and Elliott, "Russia and the Middle East."

[91] Oldberg, *The War on Terrorism*, 9.

The Russian government's campaign of selective truth in its War on Terror has clearly labeled groups to its favor; controlling the majority of media has allowed it to disseminate its propaganda without significant opposition. Other versions of the story may trickle out from time to time, but their voices are small compared to the Russian mass media's coverage of the official story. Russia's success in the information war has been effective in rallying support for the government's actions in Chechnya, and more importantly, has resulted in reshaping some expectations of Russian society. The 1990s decade of lawlessness stands in contrast with the more recent steady stream of positive reporting, showing the government as able and willing to protect its people.

Faith in government intertwines with society's perception of justice, which depends on accountability—the very trait which corruption detests. Rothstein observed, "The more you trust the institutions that are supposed to keep law and order, the more reason you have to trust other people…[because] you also have reason to believe that the chance people have of getting away with such treacherous behavior is small."[92] A positive trend in Russia began to show in just the past few years, coinciding with the media's portrayal of Russian forces as more successful in fighting the nation's battles; at the same time, television broadcasts samples of President Putin in meetings demanding accountability from government leaders. The World Economic Forum (WEF) commissioned a survey by GlobeScan which reported in the end of 2005, "Around the world, public confidence in governments is falling. At the same time, however, confidence in the national government in Russia is on the rise—and has risen every year since 2001."[93] While "public trust in the Russian government remains relatively low," Vladimir Andreenkov, director of the institute providing Russian data, said, "The fact that trust continues to grow is due in part to an active campaign by the Russian government to get out the message that it is working hard on the people's behalf."[94] GlobeScan's president Douglas Miller added:

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[92] Rothstein, "Trust," 20-21.

[93] Sindelar, "Public Trust in Government Up."

[94] Ibid.

It appears that while President Putin's policies have certainly raised eyebrows in the West, and even in close allies in Europe, it's definitely good politics for him. Certainly the initiatives of taking control back of the central pillars of the economy in the resource sectors, standing up to the oligarchs, that kind of thing appears to have played very, very positively with average Russian citizens.[95]

B.   A PRECEDENT IN CENSORSHIP

Having considered the level of social trust in Russia as well as *siloviki* efforts to influence public opinion in their favor, the next question to ask is: How much of a historical precedent does information control have in Russia? Older generations pass their values and lessons to younger ones; within the constraints of a society's efforts to maintain consistency and permanence, many cultural expectations linger long after their formation. Rationalists present the term "path dependence" to represent the idea that historical events can "have effects in the present."[96] There is a persuasive power in the phrase, "That is the way it is done." Appealing to social proof, the power comes from the perception that many, many others have chosen to act in that way; could they all have been wrong? As much as individuals would like to think they are completely free to make their own choices, their freedom of action is bounded by social context and a relatively limited options available to them. Still, they are correct that within their sphere of influence—however large or small it may be—they are able to choose for themselves. The important point is to note where that sphere ends and another begins. The fallibility of the "everybody is doing it" argument is that first, not everybody is doing it (the one considering the action serving a prime example); and second, as far as the precedent argument goes, not everyone chose to act in that way—indeed social behavior could have been the result of a few ruling elite imposing their rule of will on the many. Yet without sound knowledge to be able to differentiate such nuances, people tend to conform to perceived social norms in order to maintain acceptance within the group. With an eye on the implications of path dependence, are current movements in Russia part of a larger social cycle? Questions of information control lead to the subject of censorship.

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[95] Sindelar, "Public Trust in Government Up."

[96] Lim, *Doing Comparative Politics*, 105.

Throughout the millennium of Russia's existence, rulers have oscillated between periods of openness and periods of isolation. Initially powerful Churchmen of the Russian Orthodox Church acted as the censor, prescribing what was acceptable and what was unworthy in their fight to protect Russia's faith from external influences; this resulted in isolating Russia from the new ideas and innovations of Europe. The Russian people were subjected to strict requirements, exemplified by the rules laid out for household order in the mid-16th century handbook *Domostroi*. Also in the mid-16th century Ivan IV (Ivan the Terrible) reduced the Church's power, taking more power for himself; he increased control over access to foreign information and went so far as to dictate art forms. As Europe sparked with reasoning and greater freedoms, Russia's religious leaders clung to ancient traditions and fiercely opposed enlightenment wherever they could. While they may have meant well for the sake of stability in society (giving the benefit of the doubt here), their xenophobic stance resulted in an unintended consequence of relative backwardness. The Russian Orthodox Church controlled the flow of information to the largely uneducated masses and demanded observance of its own statutes and traditions, threatening physical as well as spiritual punishment for disobedience. The Church even had its own serfs, thereby encouraging the practice through their example and supporting state control of society. The power struggle between tsar and Church continued into the next century, exemplified by Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich in the mid-1600s encouraging Western three-dimensional paintings as opposed to the Church-authorized two-dimensional icons.

> Nikon, patriarch of Moscow, ordered the new icons seized from public places and from the homes of high officials. They gouged out the eyes of the icon paintings and paraded them through the streets, warning the artists that the same fate would befall them if they continued to create such works.[97]

As other artists had lost their eyes before them, this threat carried a real danger.

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[97] St. Petersburg Times, "The Russian Church," para. 10.

The Great Schism in the 17th century diffused the Church's power base; clergy lost significant influence and were soon made an apparatus of the state in the 18th century under Peter the Great. During the reign of Russia's tsaritsas, the nobility enjoyed quite free access to European ideas, culture and innovations. This largely ended with Nicholas I who in the 19th century reacted to the Decembrists of 1825 with more strict censorship. It was relaxed somewhat by the reforms of Alexander II (such as Emancipation of the Serfs in 1861, granting liberty to 40 million people), but tightened again under Alexander III fighting "the threat of terrorism." Nicholas II attempted to again relax censorship, but under Lenin the opposition's voice was quickly extinguished. Stalin continued more harsh and extreme censorship, followed by Khrushchev's relative loosening of the reins only to be followed by Brezhnev and Andropov's strict control. Gorbachev's *glasnost'* encouraged openness and largely continued through Yeltsin's tenure. Putin's *siloviki* are once again tightening the screws on information flow. One can see the ebb and flow of information control in Russia's history, together with a broad pattern and long-standing practice of controlling information to varying degrees—and this pattern in history does not take a significant detour around the speedbump of the October Revolution. Rather, one sees a continuation of the same, applied to greater extent under the Soviet Union. Putin's *siloviki* are currently moving away from *glasnost'* and toward greater isolation; time will tell how far they will go, or be able to go, with the capabilities of new communication technology.

Responsibility for enforcing information control has long fallen upon state security organizations, which have formally existed in Russia alongside authoritarian leadership for much of its history. Regarding the continuity of legal code supporting security organizations, Richard Pipes makes a convincing argument by noting similarities between the Code of 1649, the 'two points' of 1715, the Code of 1845, the Soviet (RSFSR) Code of 1927, and the Soviet (RSFSR) Code of 1960.[98] One sees in each a striking thread condemning "word and deed" against the state. While under Soviet rule the statutes were more brutally enforced, they existed and were employed by both Soviet and tsarist regimes alike. To enforce compliance with the ruler's decrees, a similar long

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[98] Pipes, *Russia Under the Old Regime*, 290-297.

history in covert institutions of secret police/political police may be represented by a simple list of correlating organizations: Oprichnina, Preobrazhenskii Prikaz, the Third Section of the Imperial Chancellery, Okhrana, Cheka, GPU/OGPU, NKVD/GUGB/NKGB, MGB/MVD, KGB, and FSB. Each shared a common trait, that of being "exempt from supervision by other government agencies and report[ing] directly to the emperor himself."[99] While in principle they followed similar statutes, under communist rule they grew disproportionately large. Perhaps this is explained by the advent of advancing technology; ideas and people were able to travel faster and farther than ever before in history, necessitating a larger secret police presence to enforce the dictates of the centralized state. Technology was power, to be used for good or evil. The Soviets did enjoy an advantage which many tsars did not: The advent of the telegraph and railway projected the Soviet ruler's power far and wide, allowing him to exercise power unlike ever before. This led to greater control of the vast empire, and subsequently, greater exploitation of individuals. Advancements in weaponry, war machines, and radio communications further increased his ability to enforce his ideas and dominion on others. Yet these machines and tools still could not do it by themselves; he needed a host of people willing to do his bidding. As scientists and engineers develop new and more capable machines, at the heart of the matter is the human question— whether a person cares for another as himself, or whether he advances himself at the expense of another.

One hopes that modern Russia's media messages are more reality than propaganda. Current international news continues to report dire statistics revealing *vzjatki* of epidemic proportions and rising corruption, while the gap between rich and poor widens. All the same, as the perception of social justice increases, Russians will be more willing to trust one another and rebuild their society together. Expanding social networks of trust reinforced by positive mass media messages can reshape expectations in society. A relatively predictable environment can encourage Russians to work together to restore stability, justice, and the Russian sense of greatness. Of course, for trust to last, it needs enough reality to support the perception.

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[99] Sindelar, "Public Trust in Government Up," 292.

C. SECURITY IN RUSSIA TODAY: PROTECT OUR OWN! BUT WHAT IS *OURS?*

"National Security" is a term which can bring to mind images of soldiers engaged in fierce battles or special agents gathering critical information to expose deadly attacks. Heroic, self-sacrificing patriots defend their Motherland and provide safety for their beloved people. Security is an important aspect of any society, even a primary motive for continued relationships. Nations often portray past and present battles in a favorable light, just as an individual tends to put forth his best side. Resumes and *curricula vitae* only list "achievements," not mistakes or worse embarrassments. This is natural, common, and understandable. By redefining the criteria of "self" or "us," one can then apply the inherent right of self defense to assume greater responsibility over a larger territory. Expanding a sphere of influence can be justified in a nation's view when portrayed as "protecting our own." Technology serves as a tool to communicate and reinforce cultural expectations of what is "ours," while the projected positive self-image lends to action a sense of correctness. A great many activities may be employed in the name of security, especially if a threat appears (or is made to appear) serious enough.

Siloviki have been successful in showing how they are battling selfish oligarchs, standing up to invading Westerners, and working for the common people. Conditions under their rule do appear more orderly than under the "democracy" free-for-all of the preceding decade. Public media reports more positive news and shows examples of increasing strength in the Russian military; a greater variety of goods and services in the larger cities bespeaks prosperity in the nation (money in the pocket is a different matter). Russia appears to be regaining a degree of her former glory and power, which instills pride in those identifying themselves as "Russian." Compared to some other trouble spots in the world, the water in Russia may feel just about right, somewhere near room-temperature. But is it?

One day a new article appeared on Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's website. One man's story, otherwise largely unknown to much of the world, was suddenly available across the globe:

It took nine days of police torture for Aleksei Mikheyev to confess to a crime he never committed.

No longer able to stand the blows and electric shocks, he admitted to raping and killing a 17-year-old woman to whom he had given a lift in his Russian hometown of Nizhny Novgorod.

Mikheyev later retracted his confession at the prosecutor's office. So he was taken back to the police station for another round of torture. There, he managed to break free from his captors and threw himself out of the window…. Mikheyev, who is now 31, broke his spine in the fall. He will never be able to walk again.

The woman he had confessed to murdering returned home the next day. She had gone to visit friends without informing her relatives.[100]

Perhaps the police were merely obedient to authority, justifying their actions by the obvious need to establish law and order. They may have seen themselves as simply "doing their duty," working to extract a necessary confession in order to demonstrate justice and safety for their community. Aside from the police's motives to resort to torture, the individual's point of view is also important. There is usually more than one side of a story, more than one version of events; the mere fact that an individual was able to effectively express himself beyond his own circle of close friends is remarkable in its own right. A few voices here and there may be ignored or quelled, but modern communication technology facilitates expression across international boundaries; this ability to reach out to others can rally support for a cause. Mikheyev was able to communicate his story, attract international support, and achieve a positive verdict in an international court; news of his success resulted in a significant rise of other torture stories coming to the surface. Voiced concerns of a population can serve as an important check to authority, applying pressure for accountability.

Caretakers of the "official story" understand, of course, the importance of a positive image in perceptions of accountability and legitimacy. Just as marketing researchers know that it is easier to sell meat 75% "lean" than 25% "fat," savvy *siloviki* realize the need to ensure positive framing of Russian actions. To boost the perception,

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[100] Bigg, "'My Only Thought Was to Escape'."

"last year, copying the KGB, the FSB introduced national prizes for art, cinema, and literature that created a "positive image" of the intelligence services."[101]   One way to ensure media portrays a good, strong image is to subordinate them:

> Putin's tenure has seen a systematic muzzling of independent reporting. Current methods of news media control rely on the imposition of state ownership on media companies whose editors are replaced by Kremlin supporters. Gazprom-Media, an arm of the state-controlled gas behemoth, has taken control of a number of previously independent news outlets and either closed their doors or summarily abolished independent reporting.[102]

Once proper influence channels are established, leadership communicates their carefully crafted message:

> At their first meeting with journalists since taking over Russia's largest independent radio news network, the managers had startling news of their own: from now on, they said, at least 50 percent of the reports about Russia must be "positive."

> In addition, opposition leaders could not be mentioned on the air and the United States was to be portrayed as an enemy, journalists employed by the network, Russian News Service, say they were told by the new managers, who are allies of the Kremlin.[103]

Recalling the strength of numbers on human perception, if most media reporting is positive, then it leaves an unwitting impression that "things are generally good."

By neglecting coverage of opposition leaders, they begin to fall out of sight, out of mind. In contrast, positively framing selected leaders enhances their image among the commoners, while directing attention against the "Other," a defined enemy, adds an important patriotic character to those leaders as they assume the role of leading the people in defending the Motherland. In Russian "*tak govorjat*" means "that is the way it is said;" the fact that many people speak a certain way serves as social proof that it should be accepted as the norm—authoritative dictionaries are assembled on this principle. In like manner, "*tak prinjato*" means "that is the way it is accepted," or "that is

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[101] Kuzio, "Praise and Condemnation of Stalin."

[102] Walker, "Behind an 'Information Curtain'."

[103] Kramer, "50% Good News Is the Bad News."

the way it is done." If enough people consent—regardless of whether they are witting or unwitting—their submission serves as social proof to others that the given action is acceptable. While overall this conformity can serve society well, those who manipulate the perception of widespread acceptance can then shape cultural expectations. Those directing the messengers control the message, or in other words, those controlling the communication technology shape expectations in society.

Surveillance and communication technologies continue to improve, bringing governments much closer to realizing George Orwell's vision of "Big Brother is watching you."[104] As Mikheyev's story demonstrates, however, modern technology is difficult to completely control. The Internet, e-mail and cell phones grant people a link to the wider world, grant access to information beyond what they can personally see and hear. After the Soviet Union lost its grip over the people, its archives gradually began to open. Researchers delved into the vaults, finding a wealth of information; although so little was commonly known about some important events and people in Soviet Russia's history, the Soviet regime had kept extensive records—but they had controlled the *access* to that information. People's access to technology and information can motivate them to a greater degree in society as well as in politics, increasing their ability to influence the actions of government. In this sense communication technology can serve as a check to the excesses of authority, to the abuse of power.

Putin's praises of Stalin hint that modern Russia could benefit under a similar strongman. In June 2007 he "dismissed Stalinist crimes with the words: 'Other countries have done even more terrible things.'"[105] Ukrainian media and school textbooks denounce Stalin and mourn the suffering caused under his reign, but Russian media and school textbook praise Stalin for his "strength" and avoid drawing attention to unpleasantries from that era.[106] While the Ukrainian president presents state medals to scholars "working to document Stalinist crimes,"[107] the Russian president "authorized the

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[104] Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

[105] Kuzio, "Praise and Condemnation of Stalin."

[106] Ibid.

[107] Ibid.

issuance of 500 special silver coins bearing Stalin's portrait and unveiled a plaque honoring Stalin for his military leadership."[108] Official stories differ on whether Stalin was a hero or a villain. If he is accepted as a hero, then it becomes easier for another to follow in his footsteps. Are the Kremlin's moves to dominate media an attempt to reshape cultural norms to be more accepting of the current power structure? As a Kremlin political strategist noted, "To put it bluntly, we need to fight for the water mains. We need to fight for the central networks and for the audience segments that they reach."[109] Certainly crafting a perceived threat would give adequate justification to increase "security measures" and entrench current authority figures for the sake of solidarity and stability. They would become the new heroes. An incentive exists to influence perceptions.

The days of Soviets requiring censorship of everything to include wedding invitations lingers in memory; the real question at hand is whether the current government—if willing—would even be *able* to harness modern technology effectively enough to assert extensive control over information for a reasonable length of time. As with the beginnings of the gigantic Magnitogorsk in 1929, "the Soviet government announced that the new steel complex would be equipped with the latest technology and would surpass all Western competitors in size and quality;" yet the planned "garden city" built on great suffering and sacrifice never materialized as planned, by 1987 being "a dirty and dispirited city surrounding hopelessly obsolescent steel mills."[110] The Kremlin must consider what they should do differently in their push for advanced technology so as to not meet a similar fate. While the Soviet Union did accomplish great technological feats in rocketry and space, their unbalanced focus on military weaponry together with rigid paternalism left their economy unable to meet basic needs of the population; unfulfilled promises and realities revealed by *glasnost'* significantly contributed to the regime's ultimate demise. Has Russia learned the lessons necessary to avoid repeating history? In the context of official rhetoric casting the United States as Russia's current

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[108] LaFraniere, "Russia Keeps Stalin Locked in Its Past."

[109] Comment by Gleb Pavlovsky in Troianovski and Finn, "Kremlin Seeks to Extend Its Reach."

[110] Graham, *Ghost of the Executed Engineer*, 57 and 60-61.

opponent, some Russian officials contemplate countering foreign influence via the Internet by creating "a new network apart from the global Internet and open only to former Soviet republics," separate from the current information infrastructure tied to the rest of the world.[111] While that may grant the new gatekeepers control over what comes and goes over those connections, satellite phones and data links remain a convenient backdoor—although they are expensive and therefore a limited option. The option of artificial intelligence is impressive yet remains inferior to the human capacity to reason, feel, and create. Just as technology innovations can enhance a state's power, other technology innovations can provide ways to circumvent the state. Governments may attempt to use available technology to impose Big Brother's watchful eye more effectively than in the past, but absolute control is still beyond their reach.

Existing technology allows individuals to overcome great distance and maintain contact with others of their culture at home and abroad; likewise governments can use this technology to reach out around the globe to those who fit their criteria for shared identity. A Diaspora can overcome aspects of isolation more easily than in ancient times, enhancing solidarity with and loyalty to their primary group at a distance. With geography now less of a limiting factor in relationships, people in an interconnected network look to emblems and symbols of their shared history and shared identity—*sharing a symbol declares their common bond*. National monuments stand as prominent symbols of national pride and cultural history, and hence symbols of national unity and identity. As the symbol represents the people, naturally people view an attack on their symbol as an attack on themselves.

In Spring 2007, Estonian nationalists came to political power and determined to remove a Soviet symbol from its prominent location in Tallinn to a less conspicuous place on the outskirts of town. The Bronze Soldier stood as a Soviet national monument memorializing the sacrifices of Soviet soldiers fighting against Nazi soldiers in World War II. The Estonian nationalists wanted to clearly break with all things Soviet, which they associated with Russia and occupation; for them the Bronze Soldier stood as a

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[111] Troianovski and Finn, "Kremlin Seeks to Extend Its Reach."

permanent reminder of Soviet oppression. Russian nationalists perceived Soviet as essentially Russian, and Russian soldiers not as oppressors but as liberators; for them the Bronze Soldier represented great and noble sacrifice in their sacred history. More than half a century after the most deadly war in human history, many people still take sides and argue over who was right and who was wrong. In the early morning of April 27 a small group moved the Bronze Soldier; it was a mark of independence for the Estonian nationalists, but an affront to Russian nationalists.

The move resulted in riots in the streets of Tallinn, Russian protests at the Estonian Embassy in Moscow, and stirred a bustling media battle over differing perspectives on the issue. A simple statue moved some people to a frenzy—not because the shaped metal held any particular intrinsic value, but because it was a national symbol. Creative as humans are, they use what they have available: next came a sophisticated cyberattack. "Estonia's leading news outlet could not tell the world what was going on in its own country…. Web sites around Estonia had resorted to a siege defense by cutting off international traffic."[112] Russian-language chat rooms surged with calls for further retribution, "exhorted readers to defend the motherland," and provided instructions on how to launch attacks.[113] In a fitting gesture, posts identified May 9—the Russian Victory Day celebrating victory over the Nazis—as D-Day for a large-scale attack. "'You do not agree with the policy of eSStonia???' demanded a user named Victoris on a Russian online forum. 'You may think you have no influence on the situation??? You CAN have it on the Internet!'"[114]

> At exactly 11 pm (midnight in Moscow), Estonia was slammed with traffic coming in at more than 4 million packets per second, a 200-fold surge. Globally, nearly 1 million computers suddenly navigated to a multitude of Estonian sites, ranging from the foreign ministry to the major banks…the entire country's bandwidth capacity was being squeezed.

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[112] Davis, "Hackers," 3.

[113] Ibid., 4.

[114] Ibid., 3. Note the altered spelling of Estonia: "eSStonia" makes a reference to the Nazi Waffen SS units of World War II, effectively accusing Estonia of fascism.

As the sun rose in Moscow that morning, Red Square was cordoned off. Soon, fighter jets streaked through the cloudy skies while 7,000 Russian soldiers marched past President Putin to celebrate Russia's victory over Nazi Germany. 'Those who are trying today to...desecrate memorials to war heroes are insulting their own people, sowing discord and new distrust between states and people,' Putin proclaimed to the troops.[115]

A virtual military force had attacked Estonia using infantry (script kiddies), an air force (botnets), and special forces (skilled hackers infiltrating targeted web sites).[116] Estonia reeled and fell incapacitated, while the country's defense minister considered whether to invoke NATO Article 5: "An armed attack against one…shall be considered an attack against them all."[117] Reason prevailed; a flurry of diplomatic discussions took place instead of a military response, but the event did raise questions about possible new thresholds in the 21st century.

While surely inconvenient and damaging in financial terms, no one lost life or limb in the cyberattacks as some had in the riots. Perhaps greater damage was done to national pride. The degree to which the Kremlin was involved in directing or supporting the riots and cyberattacks may not be known for many years hence; what is important is that it appears that many Russians rallied around the cause in defense of a national symbol *outside of their country*. The implications of that action are far reaching: A *perceived* territory or responsibility is more important than lines drawn on a map. The symbol represented cultural history; Russia considered her responsibility to Russian-speaking individuals in the country. These combined to raise the statue's movement to international levels. With international media and communication technology connecting people across the globe, issues easily cross unseen, abstract international borders; people are increasingly able to harness mass communication to quickly rally large numbers of people in a variety of places. Modern transportation allows those large numbers of people to traverse great distances in a relatively small amount of time. The statue's movement gained immediate international coverage, and in less than two weeks

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[115] Davis, "Hackers," 3-4.

[116] Ibid.

[117] NATO, *The North Atlantic Treaty*.

opposition groups launched a large-scale, organized attack. On another note, the German Act of Unconditional Surrender entered into force at 23:01 Central European Time on May 8, 1945; hence Europe celebrates the end of World War II on May 8. Due to the difference in time zones, however, Russia celebrates on May 9. It is worthy to note that the Estonian authorities conducted an opening ceremony for the Bronze Soldier in its new resting place. The Estonian time zone would technically place Victory Day on May 9; or out of respect for the builders of the monument they could celebrate on May 9, as celebrations in Tallinn had done for half a century. Instead they chose May 8—sending a clear signal to Russia that they now treated the Soviet monument as European, not Russian. Whose national monument was it? What meaning should it hold? This symbolic act declared an alliance with the West, a severance with the East. Perceptions of identity and loyalty continue to play an important role among intermingled peoples, wherever they may reside.

Latvia also often raises Russia's ire in their approach to issues relating to the large Russian-speaking population on their territory. Any discussion of honoring the Latvian Legion, a World War II Nazi Waffen SS unit in which tens of thousands of Latvians fought against the Red Army, is certain to ruffle Russians' feathers. When the Russian Diaspora cries foul in Riga, Russia turns a keen eye toward the Baltic state; ever since Latvia declared her independence and tore down Russian signs on the streets (replacing them with Latvian and/or English ones), the two countries have struggled over a multitude of issues. Recent Latvian President Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga claims progress:

> We in Latvia have worked out an integration model that respects every minority's right to maintain its language and culture, while safeguarding and strengthening the native Latvian language and culture. Year by year, we have been making progress in integrating our minorities, without attempting to assimilate them.[118]

This "integration without assimilation" in reality, however, means residents unable or unwilling to pass a Latvian language test and Latvian history test cannot receive Latvian

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[118] Vīķe-Freiberga, "Integration Processes."

citizenship—even if they lived in Latvia for the past 60 years or were born and raised there at any time since World War II, their loyalty is under question.[119]

Language is central to concepts of identity and therefore a factor in loyalty; Latvia faces a dilemma of whether to compel residents to learn the Latvian language just as they were compelled to learn Russian not so long ago.

> The legacy of Soviet Russification policy was still evident in the results of the 2000 census in Latvia, which showed that knowledge of Russian is still more widespread than knowledge of Latvian in Latvia: 81% of all inhabitants know Russian, while only 79% know Latvian.[120]

The official vision of a successful, "integrated society" is "one in which diversity is respected, but everyone has adequate Latvian language proficiency to participate fully in public life."[121] Education reform insists that all minority schools teach a number of classes *in Latvian*. In other words, from the Latvian government's perspective, cooperation in Latvia's society hinges on Latvian language. The government does not require an individual to completely assimilate, per se, but he needs to be able to communicate as a "true Latvian" and be able to recite the Latvian version of history in order to gain acceptance.[122] Thus the Russification policy is replaced with a Latvification policy, reinforcing the new national identity—mincing any other words sidesteps the central role of language in a person's identity.

"When in Rome, do as the Romans do," is still good advice—but Rome was not built in a day. Latvia does stand as a sovereign country and as such is able to determine which policies would be in the best interest of solidarity and stability for the nation. Yet in reaching conclusions for the best approach, the human factor plays a role: People need incentive and time to change. An aspect of human nature is that if people feel that they chose for themselves, they tend to be much more committed to the decision later; in contrast, imposing an option onto people often results in resentment and a lack of true

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[119] Mardell, "Stateless in Latvia."

[120] Muiznieks, *Minority Education in Latvia*.

[121] Ibid.

[122] For insightful comments on the process, see Mardell, "Stateless in Latvia."

commitment to the cause. In the long run, carrots work better than sticks. Either may be used in integral nationalism, which is ensuring conformity within one's society to make it more homogeneous, but one must be patient in the long process of making everyone in Rome a "Roman." In 1991 when the Latvian SSR overnight changed their title to the Republic of Latvia, the residents still spoke the same languages as the day before and still held the same cultural values and beliefs as the day before. Unlike Lithuania's decision to accept current residents as citizens of their new Republic (minimizing strife and discrimination), the new Latvian political power began a campaign of Latvification. While the rehabilitated *Satversme* (Latvian Constitution) appeared to establish a *Verfassungsnation* "on the basis of proportional representation," the additional requirement for individuals to pass a Latvian language test and Latvian history test to qualify for citizenship more closely resembled *Kulturnation* criteria with immediate demands.[123]

A decade and a half later, well over a sixth of Latvia's population remain *non-citizens* without the right to vote, a stigma equivalent to a label of *persona non grata* being politically unwelcome and unaccepted; the capital city of Riga has a population comprising 38.6% non-citizens.[124] By nationality, 43.3% of Russians living in Latvia remain non-citizens, 64.3% of Belorussians remain non-citizens, and 70.5% of Ukrainians remain non-citizens; these three nationalities (citizens and non-citizens combined) make up a third of Latvia's population, or hundreds of thousands of individuals with whom any nationalist Latvians must reckon.[125] Many "Latvians" themselves have a Latvian father and Russian mother or vice versa, complicating loyalties when the two identities are placed in opposition to one another. Indeed, a brief glance at history shows Latvia ever at a crossroads between larger and more powerful nations; one nation after another occupied the land, whether German (Saxon), Swedish, Polish, or Russian, and each left their mark on the population.[126] This skews the issue

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[123] Latvijas Satversmes Sapulces, *Latvijas Republikas Satversme*. For a version in English see Latvian Constitutional Assembly, *Constitution of the Republic of Latvia*.

[124] The Naturalization Board, *Facts and Statistics on Residents*.

[125] Ibid.

[126] An overview of Latvian history is located at Embassy of Latvia, *History of Latvia*.

and criteria of "pure blood," meaning that very few could claim "true" or "pure" Latvian physical attributes. Arguments over genes are largely arbitrary anyway; the more important issue is how people treat one another. If the Slavic Diaspora cannot find redress for grievances from current political leadership in Latvia, then Russia by virtue of shared identity can claim that their fellow Slavic brethren and sisters are in need of assistance—giving grounds for assuming the role of Defender in order to step in and "protect their own." One may hope that Latvians and Russians can agree to a compromise long before integral nationalism reaches the extreme seen in Nazi Germany: a noble cause resulting in brute violence.

A reality of modern times is that available technology allows Diasporas to maintain language and culture at a distance from their primary group. Issues relating to Russian-speaking populations in Latvia and Estonia are mirrored throughout the former Soviet republics along Russia's periphery. Russian media is often easily accessible both within the former Soviet Union and beyond via satellite and cable television, radio, and the Internet; CDs and DVDs can provide a wealth of culture in a rich audio-visual format. The economic advantage of using the volume of Russian programs available for broadcast lends itself to incorporating Russian media into local programs. With ample resources increasingly available to maintain the Russian language and cultural ties, individuals find themselves in a position to select how much of which language to employ in their lives. Travel gives a chance to see life beyond one's home, to see "hot" and "cold" cultures and compare them with one's own "room temperature." More affordable airline tickets facilitate travel, adding to the advantages of communication technology by allowing personal experience in broadening perspectives and reinforcing chosen identities and loyalties.

As Russia increases her stature and capabilities, positive framing can rally support for assuming the defense of her former sphere of influence on the grounds of "protecting her own." Issues of Russian-speaking populations such as those in Latvia and Estonia provide fodder for overtures of ensuring their interests and security. Attempting to regain lost territory is bound to clash with the new possessors—logically Russia would want to

counter NATO expansion into her near-abroad. Intelligent use of available technology can communicate and reinforce cultural expectations of what is "ours" while establishing the threat of the "Other."

In a televised speech to senior military officials, Putin stated, "In violation of previous agreements, military resources of NATO members are being built up next to our borders."[127] Having blamed aggressive action on the "Other," naturally the defenders of Russia must act to protect their own: "Russia can not stay indifferent to NATO's obvious "muscle-flexing" near the borders of the Russian Federation."[128] This stance provides necessary justification to actively build up Russia's military capabilities to counter the perceived threat.

> Keeping the relationship with Washington on the verge of a crisis and inventing an imaginary "American enemy" is creating much needed legitimacy for the current Russian leadership, which now has only Mr. Putin's personal popularity as its political base.
>
> The image of Russia surrounded by enemies is absolutely necessary for today's Russian ruling class of senior secret police officers, as it positions them in the eyes of the people as the saviors and defenders of Mother Russia.[129]

Years ago Richard N. Lebow commented, "Studies…reveal that the United States and the Soviet Union exaggerate each other's hostility in comparison to their self-image"[130] The phenomenon of "mirror imaging" continues today. Exaggerations may serve their own respective agendas well, but such mindsets clash with each other and make it more difficult to find an agreeable resolution. In learning to better discern between "hot" and "cold" perspectives, the safe approach is to seek out common ground upon which to build positive, understanding relationships.

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[127] Sudakov, "Putin Stops NATO."

[128] Ibid.

[129] Cohen, "The Failed Moscow Talks."

[130] Lebow, *Peace and War*, 91.

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V.   CONCLUSION

Humans are peculiar creatures, but perhaps more important than their quirks are their amazing powers of creativity. Technology innovations of today are sure to be built upon by fascinating creations tomorrow, tools for people to use as they see fit. Russia has seen communication and transportation technology facilitate greater interaction between themselves and with foreigners. Some cultural values and beliefs blend, but others clash. Perception, norms and identity ever act as a filter for interpreting information. "Facts never speak for themselves: they only take on meaning as we select some of them as important and dismiss others as trivial."[131] Savvy operators can manipulate communication technology to shape cultural expectations, influencing interpretations to their own advantage. The powerful norm of obedience to authority is likely to cause the majority to largely conform to the requirements of authority figures; yet recent history in Russia demonstrates how excessive control ultimately resulted in diminished social trust, with individuals wary of authority and each other. In the end, there are limits on how far a person can influence another's ideas and actions. Attempts to assert total control are likely to meet with human creativity finding ways to assert choice, as well exemplified by the *samizdat* underground publishing countering Soviet censorship.

The wonders of technology may provide greater access to information, but this can easily lead to information overload; a challenge of the modern era is that of gleaning *information of value* from the enormous amount available. Access to many different sources of information can leave a person asking: Who is right? Who is wrong? Who has truths mixed with mistruths—or do they all? It may be difficult to effectively discern fact from fiction. Two hundred years ago Alexis de Tocqueville made a valid point: "Man has to accept as certain a whole heap of facts and opinions which he has neither leisure nor power to examine and verify for himself, things which cleverer men than he

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[131] Lim, *Doing Comparative Politics*, 67.

have discovered and which the crowd accepts."[132]   Yes, but *which* crowd should one follow? People tend to rely on their *own*, those who share a common identity, for they most closely share values and interests. Russia has demonstrated how communication technology can serve as a tool to disseminate and reinforce concepts of what is "ours" while establishing the threat of the "Other."   When choosing sides on an issue, perceptions of identity influence loyalties.   Understanding Russia's current cultural perspective is necessary to properly interpret Russian messages and actions.

An implication of modern technology is that new capabilities may grant regimes the option to launch electrons under the civilian guise of some social movement. Who was responsible for the cyberattacks on Estonia? Attempts at attribution can be as diverse as the opinions on the issue causing the conflict. Humans find it difficult to resist temptation when accountability is weak, meaning more such activity is likely to follow. A cyberattack may be one of the latest weapons employed over national pride, but the record of human creativity indicates that it will likely not be the last.

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[132] Hancock, *American Heritage*, 3.

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